

# THE UNCONSCIOUS IN ACTION





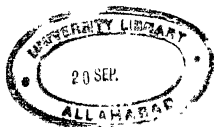
# THE UNCONSCIOUS IN ACTION

ITS INFLUENCE UPON EDUCATION

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"PSYCHO-ANALYSIS A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE FREUDIAN THEORY"  
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WITH FOREWORD BY  
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LONDON  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON PRESS, LTD.  
10 & 11 WARWICK LANE, E.C. 4  
1928

*" I have long been convinced that there is nothing  
in this dim spot which men call earth, perhaps  
nothing in the entire universe, more marvellous  
than the mind in its secret doings."*

*A Hind in Richmond Park,*  
by W. H HUDSON

## *Foreword*

A WELL-KNOWN historian, in his latest book, speaks of psycho-analysis as one of the eccentricities of the present age, and compares its growth with the spread of astrological superstition through the Roman Empire during the first century. On the other hand, Professor William McDougall, a persistent and unsparing critic of psycho-analytic theory, has recently declared that Sigmund Freud, the founder and the chief, if not the sole, architect of that theory, has done more to advance psychology than any student since Aristotle. In such a conflict of opinion between a layman and an expert, especially one who is a hostile rather than a friendly witness, it is inherently probable that the expert is nearer the truth, yet there is some ground for the layman's view. Some of Freud's teachings lend themselves all too easily to exaggeration and misunderstanding by ill-

balanced and unhealthy minds and to exploitation by charlatans; and it must be owned that the dreadful terminology sometimes used in expounding them prompts not unnaturally a comparison with the jargon of astrologists! But in a sober, critical, and comprehensive review of Freud's doctrine as a whole, such as is contained, for instance, in Dr. T. W. Mitchell's new book, *Some Problems of Psychotherapy*, the lurid elements fall into proper subordination, and a candid reader may find good reason for believing that Professor McDougall is probably right.

One may, however, accept McDougall's estimate without believing that Freud enjoys plenary inspiration. There is the example of Darwinism to remind us of what may happen to a great man's legacy of ideas within half-a-century of his death, and we now know that not even Newton's insight into nature was final. In particular I cannot think that the world will accept Freud's pessimistic philosophy of life as set forth in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where he outlines a conception so tragically grand that it extorts admiration,

yet so terrible that it seems to make even his most faithful followers uneasy. But whatever may happen to the philosophy and to the details of the scientific doctrine, it is hard to see how any unprejudiced student can deny that Freud's researches have thrown a flood of light upon (among many other things) two human relations of universal interest and of the utmost importance : namely, those between children and their parents and between children and their teachers. A master in a famous school, who had studied the classical psychologies without finding in them what he needed, once remarked to me that "the Freudian psychology is the psychology that bites." By that he meant that he gained from it what he believed to be valuable guidance in his daily dealings with his boys. It is because Miss Low has undertaken to demonstrate in some detail the nature of that guidance that I have accepted the invitation to introduce her book to its public. It would be impertinent for me to express an opinion about her qualifications for her task ; I only know that her work stands high in the esteem of those



who are unquestionably able to judge it. Nor need I add that it is not to be inferred that I accept all of Miss Low's assumptions or agree with all her conclusions. My position is the position of one who believes that there is in the Freudian doctrine much truth that no parent or teacher can afford to neglect, and consequently welcomes any exposition of that truth which is put forward competently, in a scientific spirit, and with a sincere desire to increase the sum of good in the world. I have myself read Miss Low's book with profit, and commend it to what I hope will prove to be a large circle of students.

T. P. NUNN.

*April, 1928*

### *Author's Note*

IN this small book my object is to show the bearing—a vitally important one, I think—of Psycho-analysis on education. Psycho-analytic theory and practice are still relatively young, though the past twenty years have seen remarkable developments in their application to every branch of knowledge and to every sphere of mental life. The time has come for educational and psycho-analytic research to join hands in an endeavour to test accepted ideals and methods, and to formulate, if need be, new ones. Teachers in school have a wealth of material to draw upon and opportunity for observation and investigation, it is they who are in a position day by day, week by week, to see the living child acting and reacting to his environment; and they can be the true scientific “field-workers,” no matter how limited the particular portion of the “field” which falls to their lot. The

psycho-analyst, with his expert knowledge of the deeper layers of personality, and his power of interpretation based thereon, can make use of the material obtained by the educators in schools, in colleges, in training-colleges ; together they will achieve a far wider and deeper vision than can either working alone. That, at least, is my hope ; and that there is already good ground for such hope those of us who have had experience in both educational and psycho-analytical practice can amply testify.

I have referred to the help that could be provided in furthering psycho-analytical research by the college and training-college, in addition to the school ; and indeed it seems that there is no obstacle in the way of such co-operation if the wish for it is present : here and now the college and training-college could begin by appointing to the staff a genuinely equipped psycho-analyst (in actual practice and preferably with educational experience) in an advisory capacity, who would give part-time service, as does a physician or surgeon in similar position on a hospital staff.

The permanent staff would consult with the analyst concerning the psychological research and the practical educational problems they are dealing with, and in addition courses of lectures would be delivered and seminars conducted by the analyst.

One point it is necessary to stress · namely, that nowhere am I suggesting that the teacher in school shall take over the rôle of the analyst and attempt to carry out analysis of his or her pupils. The teacher has neither the equipment nor the suitable opportunity for such work ; but he can do exactly what he now does in relation to the school doctor—that is, by means of first-hand observation and wider understanding, he can bring to the analyst (as he now does to the doctor) those children who are in need of expert treatment.

In so small a book it has been impossible to expound psycho-analytical theory ; I have had to content myself with a few essential explanations and to devote the main space to *applications* of the theory. But I trust that the footnotes giving references (mainly to Professor Freud's own work) and the list

of reference books may help to wider knowledge those who have interest in the theory itself, so that they may feel eager to join in exploration of that land of marvel—the mind of man.

B. L.

LONDON,  
*December 1927*

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## *Chapter I*

### THE BEARING OF PSYCHO-ANALYSIS UPON EDUCATION

Introductory—The waste of human potentiality  
—The deeper trends of personality revealed  
through interpretation of the Unconscious.

IF there is one thing more than another which rouses emotion and provokes thought in the average mind it is that gulf, seemingly so immeasurable and so inexplicable, between the human creature in his infantile and earliest stages of life and in his more developed phases as child, adolescent, and adult. What becomes, we repeatedly ask ourselves, of that impressive force manifesting itself in the infant and tiny child in rich sensational experience, insatiable desire for knowing and doing, for self-expression in every direction, for unwearying effort in spite of persistent failure? We see this same individuality a very few years later, as older child or adolescent, perhaps in an



environment offering every seeming advantage, dulled and negativist, uncertain of his own aims, or "unable" (as he feels) to fulfil them, suffering from lack of self-expression, ill-adapted either to accept or to remould his environment, often bringing his existent gifts to little or no fruition. Such a picture, at all events in modified degree, is only too true of a very large number of adults in civilized society. And, in spite of our great advances in knowledge and our new ideals in Education, there has been little understanding of the problems involved. It remains for a profounder and more comprehensive psychology to be applied by educators who will in the future put before themselves the goal pursued by Spinoza, who wrote: "I have made it my chief care neither to ridicule, nor to deplore, nor to execrate, but to understand the actions of mankind."

To-day it can hardly be necessary to stress the importance of psychological factors in Education; on the contrary, the danger is that the modern educationist may find himself swept off his feet by a hundred and one

theories,<sup>1</sup> some valid, some leading only to futility. Many sound attractive and even feasible ; they appear to work, as far as results consciously manifested at the time are proof ; but the educational world has become more understanding, more able to take longer and deeper views, than a few decades ago, and it demands some scientific basis<sup>2</sup> for new theories, however alluring. We need, as never before, some *testing-instrument*, for the new ideals and ideas which emerge (as well as for the old ones which still we cherish), and such a test can be furnished by the agency of Psycho-analysis. Through it we obtain knowledge of the whole personality, child or adult, in a way impossible to us before Freud's work revealed unconscious mind and its mechanisms. We are beginning to realize that it is of little avail to formulate hypotheses or argue concerning such problems as Freedom,

<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the main educational theories, past and present, see *Educational Theories*, by Sir John Adams, M A, B.Sc, LL D. (Benn's Sixpenny Library.)

<sup>2</sup> See *Education : its Data and First Principles*, by Professor T Percy Nunn

Self-development, the effect of Authority, Interest, Self-control and so forth, so long as we know only partially—sometimes, indeed, not at all—the effects of these things upon the human being's whole personality, and our own motivations for decrying or supporting them.

Through the work of Freud and his colleagues we have learnt that the manifestations of consciousness, the reasons we give to ourselves or to others for what we do and what we think, may be merely partial reflections of profound unconscious activity (and even so, distorted in emergence), and that the individual can only be known by observation and understanding of his unconscious mind as well as of his consciousness, which latter is so largely the outcome of the former. Psychoanalysis has shown us how large a part of our primitive instinctive life becomes repressed into the sphere of the Unconscious<sup>1</sup> at a very early stage, accompanied, in the majority of mankind, by an almost complete “for-

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures* (more especially chs 18, 19, 21), *Collected Papers*, vol iv, chs 2 and 6

getting " of the repressed material. As Wordsworth, with the poet's intuitive grasp of scientific truth, has it : " Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting," and we may add to " birth " the first two or three years of life. Yet, as we now know, the repressed mind-content cannot disappear ; it persists : some of it in its original aspect inhibited by conflicting forces from within and without, some of it transformed into various fresh aspects, often of reaction against the original instinct, some of it diverted from its original sexual goal towards impersonal non-sexual goals, a process known as Sublimation, in the course of which evolves what Freud has termed the Ego-ideal, or Super-ego.<sup>1</sup>

All the above evolutions go hand in hand with the educational process, using the term " educational " in its widest significance to include family life, community life, cultural ideals, and formal intellectual training. Freud's work has increasingly shown what profound

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, 1922 (especially Lecture 26), Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed, 1923), ch 20, pp 395 et seq

psychic conflicts are necessarily involved in this life-development, and how such conflicts, unresolved, may be the cause of every kind of mental disturbance and mental disability, not only in those we call "abnormal," but in every human being, though to a lesser degree than in the pronounced "abnormal" or neurotic. Further, every psychic process, emotional or intellectual, is influenced by the Unconscious and its conflicts, and only by understanding the latter can we influence or control the activities of ourselves or of others. The individual born with his primitive ego-centric instincts (themselves warring) directed always towards the maintenance of the "pleasure-principle,"<sup>1</sup> born also with the capacity for Sublimation (in a high or low degree), becomes the battleground for the conflicts between Ego and Ego-ideal, between Ego-instincts and Sexual instincts; and in the process of living these conflicts must be fought out. In proportion as he is able to resolve them on the basis of the reality-

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures* (especially chs 14, 22, 23); *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1922

principle rather than of the pleasure-principle—that is, to forego his egocentric primitive gratifications and goals in favour of reality-pleasures and goals—so he establishes his own validity ; in proportion as he harmonizes his Ego and his Ego-ideal, he averts conflicts.

Certain aspects of Psycho-analytical theory must most concern us in reference to education, and it is with these I wish to deal in this chapter, although indeed the limitations of space must inevitably render my treatment slight and partial. I can only hope—and this is the object of the book—that by drawing attention to a few of the most vital considerations the very powerful bearing of Psycho-analysis upon educational processes—of whatever type, at whatever stage—may become more clear, and that this knowledge may become operative among educators. The dynamic influence of the unconscious upon consciousness, the fact of repression and its methods of functioning, with accompanying sublimation capacity, the dependence of intelligence and the more specific intellectual life upon emotional factors,

the rôle of fantasy<sup>1</sup> in the human soul—these are phenomena which, with their implications, we are bound to investigate if we would achieve effective Education—which is, after all, only another name for helping human beings to develop for use and power what is within them. As Dr. Johnson well says to Boswell, “A man must do something with himself, however much he is lacking in the qualities he desires : he must make what he can with what he has.”

Perhaps it is as well here to emphasize a fact, often put forward, yet strangely enough never fully realized by critics of Psycho-Analysis. No psycho-analyst entertains the fantastic notion, so often attributed to him, that the teacher himself should analyse his pupils or make any attempt at Psycho-analysis in the class-room. Even if such a state of affairs were desirable, it is obviously impossible ;

<sup>1</sup> (1) Freud, *Introductory Lecture* (ch xxiii especially).

(2) Abraham, *Selected Papers on Psycho-analysis* (ch iv especially)

(3) Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), ch xxxix, etc.

(4) *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, ch on “Education.”

and it is needless to spend time and energy on such a mistaken idea. It will be a very great advance if Psycho-analysis can show our educationists that new knowledge and understanding can never be ladled out in vast spoonfuls either to child or adult, but that only by slow growth do we add a cubit to our stature externally or internally. What we may hope for is that by degrees the teaching world may come to some realization and understanding of the general implications of Psycho-analysis, using it as that testing-instrument to which I have already referred. In addition, individual teachers will more and more seek to obtain personal analysis as a very necessary equipment for their work, an equipment which in course of time may become part of a system of pedagogic training made possible by the establishment of Psycho-analytic Clinics providing greater facilities for analysis than at present exist. Only by means of first-hand contact with his own unconscious and its mechanisms can the teacher hope to interpret his pupil's whole personality. The gulf between the generations cannot be



filled (and that realization itself is made more convincing to us by means of Psycho-analysis), but understanding on the adult's part may do much to bridge it. And "understanding" must necessarily imply an ability to realize the existences of those impulses and ideas which no longer appear in the consciousness of the adult, because they have been repressed<sup>1</sup>—an obvious impossibility unless he is able to gain access to them once more and to appreciate their dynamic force. While he is unable to tolerate the manifestations from his own unconscious still less will he tolerate similar manifestations in another, above all, in the child; owing to the repressing force, he must shun such painful contact. As Nietzsche has reminded us: "Man is exceedingly well protected from himself and guarded against his self-exploring and self-besieging; as a rule he can perceive nothing of himself but his outworks."

How, for instance, can the adult recognize,

<sup>1</sup> For Repression, see Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams, Introductory Lectures, Collected Papers* (vols I, III, IV); Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd edition)

much less comprehend, the profound need for identification<sup>1</sup> with a loved (and hated) object, say the father, resulting often in quite unreasonable behaviour on the part of the child—such as whole-hearted adoration directed towards a quite unsuitable personality who yet may be associated unconsciously with the beloved father, or an equally whole-hearted antagonism towards a most estimable and attractive personality on whom an unconscious hate-identification has centred—unless he can realize that he too is motivated by this identification-mechanism, that his own affections and hostilities are in large part repetitions of his earliest and most primitive impulse-life?

Yet it is probably a matter of common knowledge to-day, among educationists at least, that the manifestations of the individual which we can consciously observe either in

<sup>1</sup> Identification See

(1) Freud, *Introductory Lectures, Collected Papers*, especially vol iv

(2) Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed). (Index will give many references)

(3) Abraham, *Selected Papers*, pp 305 et seq

ourselves or others, reason about, and judge, are only a part of the whole personality, often an insignificant fraction of the whole psychic activity, so much of which remains unmanifested because unknowable in any direct form by its owner. Still more important, the known and manifest life of the individual is always conditioned by this unknown, and we only arrive at the true sources of the former by knowledge of the latter. Hence any attempt to deal with the manifest life as the totality of the individual must result in misunderstanding and confusion. Freud's discoveries have shown us how we tend (inevitably so) to ignore this sphere of the unconscious in ourselves and in others, since that unconscious has only become so owing to the repression which takes place through the conflict between the claims both of outer and inner demands and of opposing internal impulses. Only when it is possible for such repression to accomplish itself harmoniously, without the undue creation of disintegrating complexes and with adequate sublimation, can the individual fulfil himself. In this development the whole process of

Education must, perforce, play a part, conscious and unconscious, whether it be in that early sensation-stage of life, so rich and bewildering in its evolution, or in the first beginnings of community-life within the family, or in the wider life-experience of the more specific formal education stage. Without a realization and indeed a real grasp of this situation, educators will retard and even hinder that possibility of harmonious development already mentioned.

This is the first necessary equipment of the educator, a realization of the unconscious mind and its influence upon consciousness. Since this unconscious is largely the creation of repression, it will not be difficult to see the necessity of a knowledge of the repression-process<sup>1</sup>—hence the second piece of equipment essential to the educator. The mechanism of repression is a complicated one, and by now Freud's researches, with those of other practising analysts, have shed great light on this intricate subject. It is impossible to do

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, chs. 19, 22, 27 ; *Collected Papers*, especially in vols II and IV

more than make slight reference to it here, but this much can be said. Repression is a universal psychic principle, always operative in every aspect of human existence, without which the individual could not develop. It is that process by which he unconsciously rejects and selects psychic experience through the urge of civilized cultural impulses opposing the profoundest primary instincts (ego-instincts, self-preservation instincts, and sexual instincts), which latter operate on the basis of the pleasure-principle (i.e. the obtaining of the largest, most immediate, most effortless gratification for the larger number of those primary instincts). But the repression-process does not imply the actual disappearance of the seemingly rejected experience ; it only necessitates a disappearance from the *conscious* psyche : the rejected lives on, buried from our direct apprehension, but evincing itself either by its dynamic influence upon consciousness, or by emerging into consciousness under innumerable adaptations, modifications, and disguises—some destructive to human development, some creative of the highest human manifestations.

Freud has written: "Not only the lowest but also the highest in the Ego may be unconscious."<sup>1</sup> The repression, for instance, through many epochs of human existence, of hostility between parent and child has resulted in the possibility of a family-community wherein the protective cherishing manifestation on the part of the parent is the preponderantly manifest one—obviously of advantage to the human young from a cultural point of view; the repression of the cruder aspects of sexuality has evolved a love-relation between the sexes productive of family life, domestic life, social culture, of art and religion. On the other hand, excessive repression in regard to the ego-instincts or the sexual instincts has created innumerable emotional difficulties, such as hostility, jealousy, revenge, and often neurosis in communities and individuals.

In one of his recently published works,<sup>2</sup> Freud points out the developmental nature of the Ego, out of which evolves the Super-ego

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *The Ego and the Id* (International Psycho-Analytical Library, No 12, 1927)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*

or Ego-ideal, the critic and judge of the more primitive primary Ego (sometimes made manifest as *Conscience*), the agent of the sublimating-process. He writes : " The reproach has been made countless times against Psycho-analysis - that it does not concern itself with the higher moral impersonal qualities of mankind. The reproach is doubly unjustified, both historically and methodically. . . . Since its start, the impulse to *repress* has always been apportioned to the moral and æsthetic tendencies in the Ego. . . . We need not share the anxiety concerning the persistence of the higher nature of man. so long as we concern ourselves with the study of the repressed material in the psychic life. Now that we venture upon the analysis of the Ego, we are able to answer all of those whose moral consciousness is shocked and who have reproached us. We reply : ' Certainly we take into account such tendencies ; the Ego-ideal or Super-ego is the higher nature, the representative of our training by our parents. As little children we have known this higher nature, admired it, feared it, and later incorporated it into ourselves.

. . . It is easy to show that the Ego-ideal is sufficient for all claims made upon the higher nature in human beings. As a substitution for the desire of the father, it enfolds the kernel out of which all religions have been built up. The conviction of personal inadequacy in comparison with the ideal created by the Ego gives rise to the humble religious attitude professed by the ardent believer. During the further course of development teachers and authorities have kept up the father rôle, whose prohibitions and commands have remained powerful in the Ego-ideal and still exercise moral censorship as Conscience. . . . The social sense arises from identifications with others upon the grounds of similar Ego-ideals."

From the above quotation the bearing of sublimation upon the educative process will be clear, since the latter is dependent upon the capacity for the former. Further, the mechanisms of Sublimation must be known to the educator before he can hope to achieve provision in systems of education of material and methods most suitable for it. Except in a



very rough and ready way we have little knowledge in this direction, and though it is true sublimation is fundamentally an unconscious process, the external environment, as always, can do something to help or hinder, in the future it is to be hoped we shall work out our educational schemes with a view to finding far more precisely and accurately what is necessary and appropriate to the stages of sublimation-development. In a later chapter there is more to be added on this subject, which is here merely glanced at; but before leaving it, the importance of the teacher's own unconscious attitudes must be noted. In so far as he is unable to sublimate satisfactorily his fundamental instinctive desires, he will contribute to the hindrance rather than to the furthering of sublimation in the pupil.

The third equipment essential to the educator is an understanding of the interdependence of the intellectual and emotional factors, and the subordination of the former to the latter. We have to recognize that man's intellect, his reason, his judgment, his critical powers, are conditioned and per-

petually remoulded by emotional factors . often only dimly recognized, sometimes quite unknown, by the individual himself.

Our supposedly adult "views" and theories political, economic, or social, are largely motivated by, or reactions to, our very earliest experiences and desires. Ideas of loyalty, equality, justice, democracy, and so forth are established upon the individual's experience in the earliest family-relations.<sup>1</sup> The child's personality may be hurt or disappointed by the treatment he receives from the adults—usually his parents or guardians—and he reacts by forming fancies (which later become his "views" or ideals) of treatment more in line with his own desires: his parents are too autocratic, he supports a benevolent limited monarchy; or the interloping baby brother is treated too well—as favourably as himself and probably a good deal more so; hence he evolves an ideal of democracy—the same treatment to be meted out to all alike. These

<sup>1</sup> *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, Essay IV, "Politics," Dr M D Eder, Essay III, "Psycho-analysis and the Family," J C Flugel.

primitive conditions disappear from consciousness, but live on in the unconscious, colouring our later intellectual tastes and judgments, however much the basis of reason seems paramount.

This leads to the consideration of an aspect of man which is vital to the understanding of him, above all in the stages of infancy and childhood, another of the essential implications of Psycho-analytic knowledge—his fantasy-life.<sup>1</sup> In the existence of every human being Fantasy plays a vital and continuous part, and has many manifestations: it is always the expression of the unconscious (although it manifests itself consciously to the fantasy-maker), a wish-fulfilment, from the fancy of the tiny child that he is a lordly ruler ruling a great kingdom, to the fantasy of the creative artist who is able to make out of his fantasies (the raw material) a finished product of the greatest objective value to mankind. It is in this aspect of *wish-fulfilment* that fantasy

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Jones, *Papers* (3rd ed.), Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*; Ferenczi, *Contributions to Psycho-analysis*, *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, lectures V and VI.

plays one very important part, and only by recognition and understanding of the fantasies of the child and adult can we gain any complete understanding of the mind. The myth-makers, for instance, who fantasied the Happy Isles of the Blest were expressing their desire for eternal youth and strength, and their fear of death; at a still deeper level, the turning towards the mother once again, the haven of peace and effortless existence. The author of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Alice through the Looking-glass*, along with the countless multitudes of readers who delight in his fantasy, has there expressed his wish to remain the little creature, able to creep snug and warm into delightful and mysterious spots, able to enter unknown territory (the land "behind the Looking-glass") and to penetrate others' secret doings—in short, to be omnipotent and omniscient, yet free from danger and responsibility. The child lives the larger part of his early life in this world of fantasy, partly because his immature development creates in him a continuous stream of wishes which the external world and his own inner lack of

power combine to thwart ; if we would know what manner of creature he is, we must be able to interpret the secret cipher of his unconscious wishes.

But the fantasy is not only the expression of unfulfilled wishes, it is also a *compensatory* activity, whose function is to lessen the pain of unfulfilled desires. For the child, an immature, delicately-poised, unstable entity, life-development would be impossible without the compensatory force of Fantasy. The gulf between the subjective life—the life of ego-centric pleasures and fulfilments which is the infant's heritage—and the objective life he must enter into would be impossible without the bridge of fantasy which spans the chasm between the irreconcilable claims of the object and of the subject, the creature and his outer world. To a more limited extent this is true in reference to the adult, but there is this great difference : the child has a legitimate right to his fantasies, the adult must recognize them for what they are and must be able to forgo them. Probably we all would echo Robert Louis Stevenson's wish to retain some

fantasy-joys throughout life, but a refusal to realize and face the real objective world spells shipwreck.

There is yet another aspect of fantasy all-important for consideration, that is its function as *explanation* of the unknown and non-understood. The human mind must ask, and answer in some form or another, its own questionings, for this is an inevitable mechanism of mind. Such answers are provided in the beginning of life, and to a great degree throughout life, by fantasy-material: all the great questions of the origin of life, of death, of mysterious sex-processes, of impulses to love and hate and beauty and ugliness, which stir the child must be replied to, mainly at least by his own fantasy, and one may say that his fantasy-answers are his way of coming to terms with these problems, often fraught with such fear and suffering for him.

Now, the bearing of all this upon Education is clear. It must be the work of the educator, first, to *understand* what part fantasy is playing in the child's inner life, for without such understanding he is dealing with a

fraction only of the human being before him ; secondly, to help the child by degrees to abandon the pleasure-life of fantasy for the life of reality, a thing impossible unless he has comprehension of the child's fantasies and their significance to the owner ; thirdly, to supply where possible adequate reality-explanations which the child can accept in place of his fantasy-explanations. Such work carried out through education may help to remove at least some of the inhibitions and obstacles in the way of the individual's development. From this necessity for a grasp of the individual's inner life arises another important consequence—the need for individual treatment and the uselessness of mass instruction for the young, with a further confirmation of the validity of Madame Montessori's theory of leaving the child to carry out his own pursuits as far as may be, only it demands as supervisors those who are adequate observers and interpreters. There is no question but that our educational systems and ideals of the past have been, to an overruling degree, directed towards the conscious mind alone, its manifestations and

its workings. Undoubtedly there have always been persons who through their own intuitive genius have been able to recognize and interpret the unconscious of the child ; such we have seen in the past in the ranks of the Mystics, among the Jesuits, in the person of a Rousseau, a Pestalozzi, a Froebel, a Tolstoi, or, to take contemporaries, a Montessori or a Margaret MacMillan—to mention only a tiny selection. But so far, no educational science or practice has been based upon a recognition of the unconscious mind as the dynamic force in the human being, the understanding of which is the key whereby to unlock the doors of personality, to interpret it, and to help its shaping, at least to *some* degree, to given ends. This recognition, and the implications involved, we owe to Psycho-analysis.

One main implication of a practical nature, directly bearing upon educational methods, is a shifting of values : the pupil's mental processes and phases, his power of adaptation, rather than his achievement of some specific goal (such as "intellectual progress"), above all in the early stages of his career, will be



of first importance. Far less than hitherto will Education mean a mere handing on of a body of knowledge and tradition which the adult finds compatible with his own wishes and aims, we shall learn to allow more for adult repression, which tends ever to oppose the more primitive side of the child, and in consequence to enforce too great external restraint upon him, or to encourage the repressing forces too greatly, or at the wrong stage of the child's development. Such difficulties cannot be avoided without at least some elementary knowledge of the human mind and its processes, especially on the unconscious plane. Even in respect to the child's conscious mind-content, comprehension or even realization is no easy task to the parent or educator, especially since we adults have always a more or less strong unconscious bias against knowing about those forces in the child which will be painful or difficult reading for ourselves. The child on his side, owing to his own repressions, is willing, or indeed we may more truly say, is able to express directly only certain selected manifesta-

tions of his inner life before his elders, with the result that much of the contact between the adult and the child is in the nature of the game of hide-and-seek, with the two protagonists for ever eluding one another. This may be inevitable to a great degree, but at least let us not through ignorance render the degree greater than it need be.

The novelists and diarists have revealed to us, often in tragic guise, how rich and varied, how ignored or misinterpreted, the inner life of the individual in his early stages can be, even though no good intention, no sympathetic love and interest, are lacking in the environment. We need only think of such characters of fiction as Maggie Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, as Jude in Hardy's great novel, as the heroine of *Alice in Wonderland*, or of Edmund Gosse as child and boy revealed by himself in *Father and Son*, of the young Richard Jefferies drawn so poignantly in *The Story of my Heart*, or of Lord Shaftesbury whose melancholy early years have been detailed in a recent Life, to realize what innumerable rich happenings may be afoot beneath a

surface of satisfactory placable behaviour. It is indeed astonishing to reflect that a child may pass through his whole educational career with every deeper aspect of his personality untouched, often unknown to his educators, and this applies, in varying measure, to the larger proportion of individuals, not alone to the gifted or exceptional. That we have already made a beginning towards a different educational goal—the understanding of the whole personality of the child—is abundantly clear from the sympathy and zeal with which to-day educators of every kind are investigating the theory and practice of their craft and experimenting in a genuine scientific spirit. Thus they cannot afford to neglect that knowledge which will possibly prove the greatest factor in developing a real Science of Education—the knowledge of the dynamic forces which constitute human personality.

A changed objective must inevitably produce changed methods. It is impossible to prophesy specific changes except in a general way, but it is quite certain that far more exact knowledge concerning the earlier stages of development

in the child, and the appropriate material for those stages—that is, appropriate to aid *harmonious* transference from primitive interests to more cultural ones—will be acquired and applied ; such investigation will form a large part of the study known as infant and child psychology. As a result, much of the uniform, and consequently somewhat mechanical treatment of the pupil in school will be abandoned in favour of individual study—a method which already Madame Montessori and other experimenters have proved to be fruitful in many directions. The fantasy-life of the child as expressed in its spontaneous work and play, in its social relationships, in its personal affective life, will count for more, and its imitative efforts, often so remarkable on the surface, will cease to hold first place.

Perhaps the most important change, however, and one which must precede change in our valuations and methods, will be seen in the sphere of the teacher's own outlook and training. It is hardly thinkable that in the future we shall be content to have teachers who, experts in their "subjects," know little

or nothing of the deeper forces and processes involved in human personality : if the teacher is to realize something of these, his training must be of a different type, and one essential part of it will be a contact with and understanding of his own mind and its significant conscious and unconscious trends. Through such knowledge he will be in a better position to interpret those other minds which he wishes to help and develop ; without it he may often fail as helper, and even unknowingly work harm. The very " difficult " (sometimes called " abnormal ") child will need the services of the expert, and the teacher with knowledge can fulfil the very important function of handing over to the care of the expert analyst those who show their need, rather than increasing the problem by merely regarding such children as " stupid " or " vicious " or " tiresome." Still more will he be of value if he can help his pupils, the so-called " normal," to set free and develop their affective life, and resulting from such development, their potentialities for intellectual achievement. The theory that the teacher

can "mould in a desired pattern" the pupil he teaches is one of the pleasing power-fantasies that every human being cherishes in some form or another, but because this is illusion, the teacher is not justified in neglecting to equip himself for his real function, which he must perform willy-nilly, that of supplying one of the most important elements in the child's environment, the parent substitute, and serving as a focus for the child's rich emotional life.

## *Chapter II*

### UNCONSCIOUS MIND AND ITS RÔLE IN EDUCATION

The Unconscious at work in the school-room—  
Action and reaction between teacher and pupil  
—Problems of Authority and Discipline.

IN the light of our psycho-analytical knowledge it will no longer be surprising that the most acute and controversial problems, alike for the practical teacher and the educational theorist, revolve around the question of personal relationships between teacher and pupil, involving complicated emotional issues for both sides. That it should be so is understandable when we realize that in this connexion we are brought up against powerful and deeply-repressed unconscious desires in the individuals concerned, and we become aware of a situation full of psychological significance.

In the first place, it has to be realized that the teacher is, as regards the pupil, in the

psychological situation of father or mother, and is therefore subject to the influence of the parental complexes. In addition, the teacher's position, like that of other persons in authority, provides an extremely favourable opportunity for the gratification of powerful impulses, such as self-esteem, self-love, pleasure in inflicting pain, in so well disguised a form that consciousness is easily able to avoid recognition of their true nature. On the pupil's side, equally, there is much opportunity for the gratification of his impulses in the direction of narcissism, exhibitionism, the various reactions against the father-mother complex, and numerous others.<sup>1</sup>

These considerations reveal to us the difficulties, or what might be termed the adverse aspect, of the teacher-and-pupil relationship. It must not be ignored, however, that this same relationship also affords opportunities for the gratification and development of the sublimating impulses, thereby lifting the un-

<sup>1</sup> *The Family Relationships*. See Flugel, *The Psycho-analytic Study of the Family* (International Psycho-analytical Library, No 3).



developed individual from his more primitive level to new and more advanced levels of feeling, thought, and action, and thus, as Freud has put it, utilizing the process of Education to achieve the substitution of the Reality-principle for the Pleasure-principle as the basis of action.

It may be thought from the preceding statements that the adverse aspects of teacher-and-pupil relationship have been too strongly emphasized, to the minimizing of the advantageous aspects. That perils and problems are inherent in this relationship—as in every other of human kind—is fairly obvious, but that the evils or dangers must *inevitably* preponderate is not here maintained; nevertheless, that the adverse aspects will certainly tend to predominate in a system of education conceived and carried out by educators who are unaware of their psychic selves, their own important impulses and complexes, and, as corollary, ignorant of the trends and impulses of their pupils, is unfortunately too well proved by experience. Dr. Pfister, the Swiss analyst, writing on this subject, says: “If

we would reform the education of youth, I know no better means than that we teachers undergo analysis. As often as I had the pleasure of analysing professional colleagues, I experienced a profound shock upon the recognition of manifold educational mistakes which had been committed under the influence of complexes."

Especially to-day it is essential to realize and investigate the negative and adverse aspects of the relations between teacher and taught, for the recognition of the importance of this relationship has become something of a shibboleth, even to the extent of producing the doctrine of "the personality of the teacher is everything: nothing else counts beside that element," as was recently promulgated from an educational platform. A close relationship in such a situation may be based on all sorts of uncomprehended complexes, and may lead to a forcing of the emotions and a substitution of these for various unfulfilled desires on the part of both teacher and pupil. It is interesting to enquire what trends in the educator are gratified by an attitude wide-

spread at present—namely, his desire for much greater freedom and equality between teacher and pupil, for the overthrow of “authority” in the school, for the camaraderie of a family relationship in its place, and so forth. That much of this modern attitude is a reaction against the older ideal of the teacher’s function and sphere (an ideal based upon many psychological misunderstandings) is easily understandable, but herein we have by no means the whole causation. Undoubtedly we have witnessed a development in scientific directions in connexion with educational practice and theory during the last twenty years or so, resulting in far more interest and understanding (even though yet at a lamentably low level among the community at large) and some systematic efforts to apply our psychological knowledge to the work of the school and college. This newer attitude is responsible for many of the more modern theories, among which that of the significance of the teacher’s personality is so predominant. And Psychoanalysis can testify to the accuracy of the theory which insists on the importance of

human relations and their right adjustment, by which the pupil's psychic energy can be liberated and turned into the most useful channels. But it must be recognized that this very reaction, motivated in part by what may be termed "true" (that is, valid) principles, may manifest many of the same phenomena as those inherent in the system against which it reacts, only more profoundly disguised, and the reformer, more perhaps than anyone, is in urgent need of realizing whither, and for what motives, he pushes his reform. In order, therefore, to carry forward to success what is precious in the newer educational ideals, to convince both ourselves and others of their value, we need some instrument to test the validity of the supposed reforms, and it seems clear that psycho-analytic knowledge may serve as such an instrument, revealing the profounder sources of our manifest reasoning and action.

We may ask, then, this question : What does Psycho-analysis suggest as the fundamental requirements for the most favourable relationship between teacher and taught? It is a difficult and complex question to answer, but

perhaps worth while briefly considering, in general, before passing on to the more specific problems I have named in the chapter-heading.

Putting aside the question of individual endowment, perhaps potentially inherent at birth, over which we possibly have no control, we may deal with the matters on which Psycho-analysis has already given much illumination.

First, as has already been touched upon, the educator has need of knowledge of his own psyche, in order to know and deal with his special tendencies and complexes and to be aware how and when they operate. "Only the person who is educated and inwardly free can educate others properly," writes one of our leading scientists, and Psycho-analysis is able to reveal to us that a truer interpretation of the word "educate" will apply to the unconscious as well as to consciousness. "When we are educated as regards our unconscious, there will perhaps be less tyranny, cruelty, egotism, masquerading in every conceivable form save the true one, or if they still must operate, at least we shall know them for what they are." Surely, if the educator

can be equipped to see and face reality (not necessarily one kind of reality alone) and to train his pupils in the same pursuit, he has gone far to deserve the name of educator.

Secondly, he must have a knowledge of, and a power of getting into contact with, the pupil's psychic life, a qualification which will depend much upon the one first-mentioned—his realization and control of his own psyche. We cannot interpret, nor even see, certain complexes in another unless we know our own, since the repressing-forces which hide our own from us continue to operate in concealing or distorting (in directions both favourable and unfavourable) in others those complexes which touch our own repressed ones. Thus self-misunderstanding begets misunderstanding of others, this often leading on to complicated issues, either for individuals or nations. As one writer has said, "We educators must be capable of seeing through the pupil, and this we cannot do if we do not know our own complexes, and the pupil can simply play upon us."

In the third place, the would-be educator

must have achieved at least a fairly satisfactory fulfilment of his more important desires, unconscious and conscious, in order to avoid using his situation for his own personal gratification, thus distorting the purpose of his work. Psycho-analysis seems to prove that sublimation can only be carried to a certain degree, varying, of course, with each individual, and an attempt at an undue degree of sublimation may result in subversion of normal impulses. For example, the man or woman with fairly strong homosexual impulses which are quite unrealized may seek unconsciously to fulfil the unconscious desire by becoming a teacher, with possible evil results to the pupils—as was the case with the heroine of Clemence Dane's admirable study *Regiment of Women*. On the other hand, the homosexual tendencies (which we all possess in some degree or other) may be successfully sublimated in those individuals in whom, perhaps, the impulse is less dominant (or has been able to emerge more freely into consciousness and so obtain some normal gratification, such as in a close friendship with one of the same sex), with results unusually

favourable to the work of education. Some of the outstanding names among the world's educators (just as among world-reformers) have been people of this type, both male and female, whose unconscious trends have led them to exceptional heights of devotion and enthusiasm in their chosen work. The important thing is that the educator shall know what is going on within himself, otherwise he may be carried away by deep unconscious impulses, to the very great detriment of the pupils to whom he is in a relation of extreme significance and power.

Fourthly, the connexion between intellectual processes and emotional ones must be understood by the educator in order that, instead of stultifying or neutralizing, he may further educational results. As will be shown in more detail in a later chapter, by psycho-analytical investigation we can discover how intellectual problems and processes have as their dynamic basis emotional factors, and cannot be satisfactorily dealt with unless these latter are envisaged by the educator. We have seen that a distaste for a subject because it presents



itself as "difficult" or "impossible" may prove to be motivated by a negative father-complex, disguising itself in this form, and the teacher, if unaware of the pupil's attitude, cannot modify his own (which may be the cause, in part, of his pupil's antagonism) nor set the latter upon any new and more useful psychic path.

The qualifications just enumerated would seem to be essential: without them, the educator can scarcely hope to carry out his work with success—even with them, his work is of the most delicate and complex nature—but such qualifications imply ideals, methods of education for the teacher, equipment, environment, types of personality, other than those we accept to-day as appropriate to the educational process, in its various stages.

Such considerations open up a very big problem, one impossible to deal with satisfactorily in a few pages, and indeed forming rather a digression from the main theme of this chapter, though bearing upon it in no small degree; a word or two, therefore, may be said on the way in which the educator's

psycho-analytical knowledge will affect his position, not only in relation to his pupils, but also to the outside world. He will become much more than hitherto the expert, not in the sense of the word as now used, which implies that he is expert in some academic direction and thereby to some extent cut off from the "man of the world" (and by the latter often despised), but rather in the sense of the scientific expert: one who is skilled in his craft and has a thorough grip of the principles and phenomena he deals with, therefore to be reckoned as an important factor in the community since he can illuminate so-called "practical" affairs, conduct-problems, and general social life. No longer will he remain in the eyes of the general community a "pedagogue," good enough to deal with children and adolescents and with academic problems, but negligible when vital questions are at issue; he, perhaps more than anyone, save the scientists, will be in demand as the expert in the most complicated and most significant phenomenon which exists—the human mind.

Turning from the foregoing somewhat

general considerations which involve so many matters of interest—too many for the present space—the more specific questions of emotional relations and those bound up with the exercise of Authority and Discipline, can now be touched upon.

The emotional life which has been developed in the individual during his first few years out of his family relationships and out of his expanding physical and sensational life, accompanied by important repressions, all this at school-age is now carried over into a new environment in which the same complicated processes as in the home will be enacted. Psycho-analysis has been able to demonstrate that human contact through the medium of group-formation, small or large, does not create new psychological elements, but only releases reactions and tendencies otherwise obscured. Thus, as we should expect, we find the child's main trends express themselves now in relationship to the substitutes for parents and brothers and sisters, that is to his teachers and fellow-pupils. And since the most important of these trends lie largely in

the unconscious, at least in their direct form, it is necessary to be equipped with some guide to that unconscious.

And here it is well to repeat in a few general words what is the part played by the unconscious in each one of us. First and foremost it is the well-spring of all our interests, or lack of interest, our likes and dislikes, our power and capacity—all of which results in our varying "behaviour." Secondly, it is the storehouse of all our wishes, some of which only express themselves manifestly in highly disguised forms, disguises which must baffle the observer unless the latter has some power of interpretation; hence the obvious need for such power on the part of the educator. Thirdly, it is to be noted that the individual gains much pleasure from indulgence in his unconscious wishes and fantasies (since they are moulded after his heart's desire, divorced from the pains and setbacks which meet us at every step on the reality-plane), and is liable to consume much energy either in giving himself up to this pleasure or in a conflict between his fantasy-wishes and the ideals imposed by his Super-

ego, a conflict which may result in an appearance of incapability, idleness, or apathy. Such energy is not for use : it is uneconomical and barren of productive issue. In affording or withholding opportunity for fantasy-making to shape itself to reality-ends, our environment, above all the human relationships in it, must play a vital part ; hence the need for the teacher, who forms one of the largest factors in the pupil's environment for a long period of time, to have some grasp of the child's "inner" situation. Let us consider some of the more specific unconscious tendencies and reactions which in the school and class-room get such rich opportunity for further development.<sup>1</sup>

First, there is what may be called the parent-child situation, characterized by the

<sup>1</sup> The Child's Unconscious. See .

Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* (Allen & Unwin, 1913), *Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory* (Journal of Mental Disease Pub. Co., New York, 1910), *Introductory Lectures*.

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), (espec chs xxxv and xxxvi)

Ferenczi, *Contributions to Psycho-analysis* (Badger, Boston), (espec. chs. viii and ix).

ambivalent attitude of the child (that is, love and hate co-existent), accompanied by his desire to mould himself on the parent-pattern, sometimes termed his identification-wish.

It may be pointed out in passing that ambivalency is an essential attitude of humanity, linked up with what Freud has called the "Œdipus" relation, and recognized, though often in a disguised way, by all human beings. "All men hate the thing they love," with its opposite, is no would-be clever paradox but a profound truth, and one that has much bearing upon education. We are bound, then, to recognize it, and also to understand that one of the two opposing emotions, so inextricably mingled, will tend to remain unexpressed in direct form until a favourable opportunity presents itself. Such an opportunity may arise, for the child, in his school-life, wherein he finds a parent-substitute upon whom he can direct that emotion which hitherto has had no outlet. Thus it is that the virtuous home-child so often becomes the villain at school, and vice versa, and the teacher finds himself the recipient of hero-worship, fierce

antagonism, or negative feeling, as the case may be.

The desire to become as the loved object—the wish for Identification<sup>1</sup>—is one of the most powerful factors in the human being, enabling him to progress along a cultural path, and is closely bound up with the child's desire for power, his fears, and his rivalries. It perforce plays a great part in the unconscious, since it must suffer much repression from consciousness, and therefore in the school we expect to see this wish expressing itself, both in direct and in various disguised forms.

The specific relation of the child to its parents, especially that between opposite sexes (boy to mother, girl to father), to which Freud has given the name "Œdipus" and "Electra" situations, respectively, since it is the first, the most profound, and the fundamental relationship for the child, will, as may well be expected, operate in the child's relation to his teachers (the parent-substitutes). Arising

<sup>1</sup> Identification.

Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, Lecture 26.

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), see Index

from this, the child's inferiority sense (often conscious as well as unconscious), his guilt-feeling, his desire for self-punishment—all these unconscious attitudes can operate in relation to his teachers, his fellows, and his work.

Curiosity, so powerful an instrument for the child's development, is another of the very important mechanisms which may become largely, or even wholly, repressed, owing to the guilt and fear initially bound up with it; and the result of such repression can have endless reactions just in the sphere of learning, knowing, investigating, that is, in the developing mental life. Thus we see the pupil in school bringing to bear upon his new relationships, new obligations, and new adaptations, those powerful wishes and emotional attitudes, some of which may already be creating complexes for him, hidden from himself and all others as far as direct expression goes, but most dynamic in their power to mould his fate. Not only this: his unconscious loves and hates, fears and guilt, repressed curiosity and jealousy, must all impinge upon the unconscious trends in the teacher and the



manifestations therefrom, thus creating a possible double source of difficulty. For the teacher, just as in the case of the child (and every other human being), must obtain gratification for *his* unconscious impulses, either in a way which is fairly balanced between direct and disguised expression (the lot of the more "normal"), or in more direct and primitive form, or in the more deeply-disguised form of the neurotic which inevitably leads to psychic conflict.

Further, it must be remembered that the very fact of becoming a teacher implies the presence of certain trends and desires; the so-called "accident"<sup>1</sup> of one's life-work is never a chance-affair, but is motivated by powerful unconscious wishes which may result in a well- or ill-chosen career. Only will it be a satisfactory choice when the unconscious wishes obtain gratification in harmonization with conscious desires; then we may say a man has truly found his vocation. Illustrations abound, and one may be referred to

<sup>1</sup> *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, Essay VI, "Vocation"

here ; the excessive love of power to be found sometimes in the teacher (and in other men) is often the outcome of, and compensation for, unconscious fears and doubts, themselves a reaction to the original guilt-feeling in relation to his parents : hence his desire for power must always remain unfulfilled yet manifest itself in excessive form. If, in his unconscious wish to play the father's rôle, he is sufficiently free from guilt to strive consciously after self-development, and special achievement, then he will be able to exercise his power-desire in a much more satisfactory and balanced way.

We are forced to enquire, how will the teacher's unconscious trends influence the pupil's unconscious, and vice versa ? The answer to such enquiry is only to be found by careful investigation, but one thing is certain—the mutual interaction in whatever direction is always operative and of the very greatest significance in the educational process. It will be worth while to consider this mutual reaction at work in connexion with some of the attitudes already referred to.

The child's fixations upon the parents, so

all-important for its development yet capable of arresting that very development if too extreme, can be over-encouraged and maintained static, by the teacher's influence, all unknowingly. Such a fixation is often much more easily achieved at school than even at home, if the teacher fosters it through unconscious self-gratification. To obtain the love and interest of the pupil, to turn him into a replica of his teacher, may be the latter's unconscious goal, directing his behaviour, in spite of his theories. We adults are all well aware how gratifying it is to be treated as the beloved father and leader, to be given only tokens of love, never to suffer hostility or criticism; on the other hand, the child finds his pleasure in identifying himself with the beloved father-figure, an easy path by means of which he avoids his guilt-sense, his inferiority-feeling, and the burdensome responsibility of developing on his own lines. Thus the pleasure-principle in both teacher and pupil meet and combine to maintain the identification situation, which may result, for the child, in a condition of impotence, a com-

plete inability to develop and function via his own personality.

Some of our modern educational movements in the direction of freeing the child from this too-great dependence would seem to be on true psychological lines, but in regard to others the implications involved are dangerously false. The theory of the child's innate perfection, distorted only by bad environment or misguided educators, can have no basis of reality ; rather its source will lie in the conflicts of the educator himself, his fear to recognize that the child, like himself, is compact of the most diverse impulses—social and anti-social, egoistic and altruistic, gross and sublimated—and those elements which he deprecates and would avoid recognizing are just as valid for development as their opposites. Hence, what is proudly claimed as “Free Discipline,” “Self-government,” may turn out to be, quite as much as the rigid disciplinary system, the teacher's line of least resistance in response to his own unconscious fears.

An interesting example revealed itself in the case of a teacher of a middle form of boys in

a large secondary school, who discovered in the course of his analysis that his seemingly-rational, even philosophical theory of punishment was based upon a profound sense of guilt and consequent fear. He had always argued that punishment was degrading to the teacher, involving lack of dignity and a recognition that the latter's character was unable to evoke love and respect—a very feasible-sounding attitude in itself, but strikingly combined with strong irritability and a hostile outlook, both much restrained. His fantasies revealed vindictive revenge-wishes, accompanied by equally strong guilt-feelings, both directed towards a father-figure, usually disguised as "authority," "dogma," or "soulless despotism." The whole idea of punishing and being punished (in his childhood years he had really been beaten by his father on various occasions) was fraught with guilty pleasure and guilty dread in his unconscious mind, and it was equally impossible for him either to carry out deliberately a punishing rôle or to give up his vindictive desires; hence his rationalized theory which served to disguise

from himself the true basis of his behaviour—but not from his pupils. We have to recognize that by means of his own unconscious each individual reads instinctively the unconscious of another, even while he appears to be employing only conscious judgment and interpretation. In the case cited, it was clear that the master's deeper motivation was grasped by his pupils' unconscious, and far from rendering him respect and obedience on account of his enlightened view (which attitude might be expected if only conscious functioning is allowed for), they reacted with coolness and even with impudence.

Nor must we overlook the need of the child to experience authority ; without it he lacks one most important factor for his development. The Parent-ideal, from which he makes for himself a pattern of behaviour, is the source of his own later Ego-ideal, and both in following along its lines and in reaction to it he gains power over himself and further fruition. The negation of authority on the part of the parent (or parent-substitute, such as the teacher) may operate injuriously in various ways, two of

which are specially important. In the first place, either a sufficiently developed Ego-ideal may be rendered impossible and the individual falls below his correct cultural level, hence the anti-social, egotistic, unadaptable being ; or he may react with a too rigorous Ego-ideal of his own fantasy to compensate for the lack in reality, hence the over-guilty conscience, or the narrow fanatical personality, or the too-idealistic type. In the second place, the child's own fears and doubts, his sense of weakness and inferiority (all of which are inevitable to childhood), may be too acutely reinforced by the absence of authority, creating the self-depreciatory non-confident personality with all its inherent disabilities.

This wish to deny the validity of any exercise of authority or influence by the teacher upon the pupils is widespread to-day among both practical and theoretical educationists, even to the extent, at times, of juggling with ordinary interpretations, or falling back upon some phrase made sacrosanct. Thus, for instance, in a very recent book on the present-day school we read : " In the Montessori system

prizes and external forms of punishment have no part. If a child idles, he is allowed to idle and to experience the boredom that comes from having nothing to do. If he disturbs his classmates, he is put in a corner to work by himself. Isolation is the natural consequence of making oneself a nuisance to others." The writer of this evidently believes that having called a certain result a "natural consequence," it is thereby eliminated as a punishing force, and will not be considered as evidence of any antagonistic attitude on the part of the grown-up.

And even Mr. Bertrand Russell, in his book *On Education*, suggests that "minor" punishment (speaking severely or reprovably) is necessarily of a different order with very different effects from what he terms the "severe" kind. In his chapter on "Punishment" (p. 134) he writes: "The most severe punishment that ought ever to be necessary is the natural spontaneous expression of indignation. On a few occasions when my boy has been rough with his younger sister, his mother has expressed anger by an impulsive



exclamation. The effect has been very great. The boy burst into sobs, and would not be consoled until his mother had made much of him. The impression was very profound, as one could see from his subsequent good conduct towards his sister."

That the mother's impulsive exclamation *did* achieve a punishing effect is surely plain, and one possibly of more significance than, say, a slap, or banishment from the room. From the standpoint of the unconscious, it is a great error to imagine that the emotional effect and possible resultant conflict is to be gauged according to the obvious *external* force or form of the punishment. The crude punishment, even of some physical severity, may not serve to arouse any more of the guilt-sense with its accompanying repressions than mere words from the person who stands in the deepest and most intimate love-and-hate relationship to the child, especially if the latter is of highly sensitive type. Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which the unconscious can fashion for itself out of the veriest trifles (as judged by conscious standards) not only instruments of delight but

also deadly weapons with which to mete out to its owner pain and destruction. The crumpled rose-leaf in the bed of the fairy-tale princess is a just symbol, and to estimate rightly the degree of significance produced by the punishment-factor, of whatever nature, we must have recourse to unconscious levels. There we find, as has been revealed so strikingly by the well-known child-analyst Frau Melanie Klein,<sup>1</sup> how powerful is the ever-recurring sense of guilt in the young child, leading to a demand for self-punishment and a wish to inflict punishment on others, one of this pair of impulses always remaining in the unconscious.

Any detailed account of individual cases is here impossible owing to lack of space, but a reference may help to illustrate the subject. A boy of six, who had been tiresome and obstreperous when much younger, then docile and quiet in disposition, showed himself at the end of his first term in the kindergarten morose and aloof, unwilling to respond to the teacher's very sympathetic advances or to the other children's companionship; he moped,

<sup>1</sup> See *International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, Vol IV, Part 4, 1923; "The Development of a Child," Melanie Klein.

was aggressive at home, and ceased to take his former interest in physical and mental activities. During the first weeks of his school life it happened that the kindergarten mistress pursued her usual policy of leaving the new child somewhat alone with the idea of giving him time to settle down and develop on his own lines ; when he was insubordinate in trifling ways she merely ignored him, or said : " You will soon be able to do as the others ; they don't behave like this, and I shall see you change soon, I am sure."

As he continued in his disappointing and unsatisfactory way, he was brought for analysis, in course of which the following facts were revealed. To this boy being " left alone " was a signal mark of punishment, linked up with an actual experience (construed by him as a punishment) of three and a half years earlier, when aged two and a half. His younger brother was born at this date, and the older child Philip, hitherto a very close companion to his mother, was relegated to the household maid, who had neither time nor inclination to bother much with him—a very ordinary

state of affairs in a smallish household. But this occurring at the critical stage of the Œdipus-conflict, and to a child of well-developed sensibility, could be most easily interpreted by him as a consequence of his own inner guilt, that is, his unconscious powerful antagonistic feelings towards his father, accentuated by the birth of the new baby, who became also an object of hostility. These hostile emotions, further repressed through subsequent conditions (i.e. his re-establishment as the important elder brother and his developing love for the new baby), were re-vivified and able to manifest themselves, under disguise, with his entry into school and the repetition, as it seemed to him, of the "punishing" (i.e. ignoring) attitude of the mother-figure (the teacher). "My guilty wishes and thoughts," his unconscious seemed to say, "have again found me out, and bring the same bitter punishment once more : I am left alone, and of no account in comparison with the detested rival, the interloping new-born child" (represented for him by his school-fellows, the "good"

children) "whom my mother loves now above me: only in so far as I become like this detested creature can I be released from punishment and get back again mother's attention, i.e. her *love*." It may be noted, in passing, that it was almost in just such words the child spoke during analytical treatment, though couched in more childish *form*.

Since it was too painful and too dangerous for the child to realize in consciousness such feelings towards the beloved and revered parents, his emotions were forced to express themselves in the only bearable channel, that is in a sense of his own guilt and in self-punishment, the latter also covering a punishing-wish towards his parents. Hence he could not let himself enjoy the love and kindness of the teacher, nor the pleasure of the other children's companionship, nor affectional relations with his parents, nor any enjoyments of mental and physical kind—all unconscious of what he was expressing. Not for a long period did the child reveal to the analyst any of his antagonistic feelings: he reiterated at first with persistency that he liked school, his teacher, and

his school-fellows, and loved his parents and younger brother. The expression of his anti-feelings was accompanied with shame and fear of the consequences of being so "wicked." In the upshot, his analysis was able to give him such release that he found himself able to display his affectionate social personality, relieved from his burdensome sense of guilt, and with the emotional change came much-increased mental development.

Such a case as this is very familiar to any analyst, but it is important for those who read to bear in mind that it was the *unconscious* attitude of the child which created the difficulty, and until these became known to him his situation was unalterable. An even more important point for the educator is to realize that the emotional and mental life, conscious and unconscious, of the young child is a far richer and more complicated phenomenon than hitherto has been supposed. It may be worth noting that the boy referred to, whose analytic treatment took place about five years back, is still known to the writer and continues to develop on very satisfactory lines. It will be

seen that in this case the attitude of the teacher, judged by abstract and theoretical standards, was both intelligent and sympathetic ; nevertheless it missed its mark, since it took no cognizance of the individual child's situation, especially of the inner and most dynamic factors. If it is asked, how can the teacher dealing in his daily work with large numbers (often inordinately large) handle satisfactorily such cases, and they are constantly recurring, though too often unrecognized, a difficult question is before us, though not unanswerable. It must be frankly admitted that so long as the teacher's work consists of bringing into line, and more or less to the same level, mentally and socially, large collections of young human beings, and rendering them capable of uniform achievement at given stages, not a great deal of real observation and discovery can be effected. Yet even under such adverse conditions the teacher with illumination gained through personal analysis will be able to recognize the signs, at least, of inner conflict, and two resources are at his disposal : he can do all in his power to remove external obstacles,

and he can call to his aid the expert by whom, via psycho-analytic treatment, the conflict may be resolved.

In a subsequent chapter some further consideration will be given to the teacher's work in removing external obstacles from the pupil's path ; here, in concluding this chapter, it is only necessary to remind ourselves that happily the teacher's rôle is no longer confined to mass-production, for the many new educational developments which are taking place afford scope to those with knowledge and goodwill to carry out genuine educational work.



### *Chapter III*

#### BEHAVIOUR AS CONDITIONED BY UNCONSCIOUS WISHES

##### Some Fundamental Problems of Behaviour

IN the previous chapter I touched upon that fundamental issue for human beings involved in all our activity, bodily and mental, namely, the problem of how to release and make use of the creative energy with which each individual is endowed in varying degree.

Only if this release for use takes place, as has already been pointed out, can real growth occur ; if it does not, or only in a very retarded degree, some substitute must be found—a backstairs way, so to speak ; and here it is that difficulties arise—fixations, distortions, illness, neurosis—manifesting themselves in positive or negative form. Thus we get the general developmental behaviour problems along with specific and personal ones, all

arising out of this root-problem, and forming the material of the individual inner drama.

To-day, doubtless, many are prepared to accept, theoretically, the view that the most important goal of training and culture is ability to use personal capacity to its utmost in the interests of the individual and the community. They may even go so far as to hold that the achievement of such a goal is the purpose of education. Yet the practice of this theory is fraught with difficulty. The adult is inevitably prejudiced in favour of certain ideals, traditional or personal, and (as has been pointed out by Montessori and others) it is far easier, and infinitely more gratifying, to give a pattern of himself than to allow the young to shape their own designs. This is one side of the problem ; on the other is the spontaneous, inherent need of the child for authority and guidance—a very much stronger demand than is imagined by many present-day educational reformers.

Out of this combination it is not difficult to develop a situation in which the teacher (or parent), most often unawares, is creating

another in his own image. The following passage from Bertrand Russell's book *On Education* (p. 48) may illustrate the point. He writes: "I will take four characteristics which seem to me jointly to form the basis of an ideal character: vitality, courage, sensitiveness, and intelligence. I do not suggest that this list is complete, but I think it carries us a good way. Moreover, I firmly believe that, by proper physical, emotional, and intellectual care of the young, these qualities could all be made very common."

The "ideal character" conception, however splendid a one—as I think it in this case—is liable on the one hand to hinder the owner from giving full recognition to many qualities of the child which do not happen to constitute his "ideal," for the unconscious can operate to exclude what is out of harmony with our own wishes, or tiresome, or difficult. On the other hand, the fact that it is the grown-up's ideal, explicitly or implicitly expressed, may encourage the child to mould himself too closely on Mr. Russell's pattern. It is true that the latter's interpretation of his chosen

"qualities" is wide and understanding, and leaves much room for freedom, as far as conscious ideas are concerned, but not all could follow in his footsteps in those respects. Here, then, we are up against a great difficulty arising out of the clash between adult ideals and the child's spontaneous urges, which most usually is "resolved" by the latter giving way, ostensibly, to the former, in other words identifying himself with this new ideal.

This identifying process, one of the most powerful of the unconscious impulses, seems essential to human development, yet it can also constitute a grave danger. For it is not only a process through which the child gains expansion and satisfaction for his emotional needs—his love- and power-impulses get fulfilment by taking over the ideals and attitudes of the admired parent-figures—but also one by which he can cast off the burden of wishing, thinking, and knowing for himself, and so avert punishment for his "guilty" wishes. Every teacher is familiar with such a situation, which may be expressed in the child's behaviour as docility, goodness, obedience, eagerness to

please ; but not every teacher realizes how powerful a force is working unconsciously to inhibit instinctive individual impulses in favour of those spheres of energy sanctioned by the parent authority, too often to a destructive degree. It is for the teacher to do what is possible, though a real analysis alone may effect lasting change, to redress the balance, or at all events to prevent a still heavier weighting of the scales by means of further identification. Much could be effected by a change in the relationship between teacher and pupil : in the first place, there must be less anxiety on the former's part to shape the child in accordance with some personal ideal, and in its place a more scientific attitude. This involves less of the personal relation, above all of what Dr. Bernfeld<sup>1</sup> has called the "pair-relationship," in which the teacher makes the child ("his" boy, as it is so often said) his love-and-hate object, releasing his own repressed wishes. "He faces two children : the one to educate, and the one he has repressed in himself, and he must treat the

<sup>1</sup> *Sisyphos*, by Dr. S. Bernfeld (in German), International Psychoanalytical Press (Vienna), 1925.

former in the same manner as the latter has been dealt with (i.e. by repression of instinctive desires)."<sup>1</sup>

This situation results in guilt and inhibition, and from these emerge anger and revenge-wishes, which are directed against himself in reality, but are transferred to the pupil, and the "pair-relationship" becomes an antagonistic affair. Yet the personal relationship cannot be abandoned; without it, and the pleasure it provides for the child, no advance could be made along the difficult path of "reality," and of adaptation to the external world. But the teacher will be able to combine his rôle of loving and beloved parent-substitute with that of the impersonal agency revealing and illuminating the child's inner and outer world in so far as he has resolved his own inner conflicts and has achieved his own reality-goal, and no further; thence also will proceed the ability to speak truth in answer to questionings, to promote free investigation, and to give fantasy its due place.

These two fundamental behaviour-problems, involving equally teacher and pupil, may be

<sup>1</sup> From *Sisyphos*, Bernfeld.

summed up as follows. One is the question of reconciliation between the child's strong need to identify himself and his ideals with the attitude of the parent (or teacher) and the opposing but equally powerful need to gratify his primitive urges ; the other, the persistent impulse on the part of adult and child to maintain the pleasure, fraught with guilt, of the original parent-child situation (termed by Freud the "Œdipus-conflict"). Emerging out of these two is that which might be called the most difficult and complex of human manifestations—the guilt-problem,<sup>1</sup> which in its turn powerfully influences, and is influenced by, the "authority" question. Perhaps the most extraordinary phenomenon we have to face in human beings, compact as they are of baffling aspects, is this one of profound and persistent guilt-sense, almost giving colour to the theologians' "Original Sin" theory, were it not that a hopeful proportion of such guilt-feeling is eradicable, even with our present limited knowledge. Turn where we will—to

<sup>1</sup> Guilt-complex Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), Freud, *The Ego and the Id*.

the lofty conceptions of ancient Greeks and Egyptians, to the elaborate fabric of rite and custom among primitive peoples, to the fears and beliefs expressed in folk-lore and fairy-tale, or to the ideas embodied in world-religions—always this sense of guilt reveals itself, penetrating countless disguises. And to express, to enjoy, to counter, and to escape from it becomes one of the intensest preoccupations of the unconscious, resulting in many unexpected, seemingly unexplainable, sometimes magnificent, sometimes adverse types of behaviour. As already pointed out, it is the child's guilt-sense that urges it to insist upon a punishing authority (to wipe out that guilt), and yet to fear and hate this authority which is so poignant a reminder; it is his guilt-sense that prevents him from allowing and enjoying his own impulses and capabilities, forcing him to follow in authority's footsteps; and it is that same sense of guilt which may ultimately build up a self-condemning and paralysing standard.

It is not difficult to realize that out of this attitude many emotional disturbances can arise,



and that the problem of freeing the child from his burden of unconscious guilt becomes one of the most urgent considerations for the trainer and teacher of the young, above all, of the very young child. A problem, not (as some educationists would seem to think) a simple matter easily solved by the expedient of abandoning all authority over the child. The result of such a policy may be an intensification of guilt owing to a sense of being cast out, unprotected, the Ishmael of the biblical story, and any authority, however coercive, may be less disastrous. Ordinary observation at a conscious level finds indications in this direction : a young child, for instance, is often *relatively* more free and tranquil with an authoritative adult (mother, teacher, nurse) provided the authority is a real thing, than with one who is uncertain, over-anxious, or merely lax.

The problem remains—how to provide authority which is adequate to meet those inner demands proper to the child (whose sense of littleness and weakness as compared with the adult is very keenly felt), yet not so binding as to maintain, and even intensify,

the crushing burden of guilt which internal and external forces conspire together to create. We can at least begin to tackle the matter along the easier line of approach, that is, by a change in the external environment over which we have some control. In this external situation the most important factor is the human one, in the shape of parent or teacher. This is the significant "authority" which can be advantageously lessened, and through its diminution deeper internal readjustment of the child can be effected. The adult's half-hearted, and often timid acceptances which he seeks, unconsciously, to pass on to the child, his fear of free speculation and investigation, his insistence upon authoritative example and utterance in the sphere of knowledge, his need to ignore the child's reactions—these characteristics, capable fortunately of modification and transformation, are actively influential, the more so because springing from unconscious sources.

The constant imposing of authoritative opinion is probably one of the prevailing ways in which the teacher expresses his own guilt-sense, and it is remarkable how influential it

may become upon the choice and treatment of material for school-work. In history teaching, for instance, we often find that only the "authoritative" persons, their acts and sayings, find a place at all, and evidence against them is often unknown or forgotten by the teacher; or, all the emphasis is laid on some special aspects of a character, because in them he is the powerful king or father-figure, and it is in that rôle he makes his appeal to the teacher. It is more common to find examination questions concerned with the so-called "important" work of a man than with what is most beautiful, and still more general to demand that the examinee shall be able to state with repetitive exactitude what "authority" has said and thought, which is treating the said authority as the bogey-man of the unconscious, placating rather than appreciating him.

Even in the case of the very young child the educator frequently imposes too early and too stringently conceptions of authority which exercise great influence: for instance, ideas of God which may be valid to present to the more developed mind, can too readily be

shaped by the child's unconscious guilt-sense into terror-inspiring thoughts and feelings, no matter how reasonably and attractively, judged from the conscious level, they are presented. Here is a little vivid illustration of such a process. A boy of six years questioned his mother about God : she answered with the best resource she could, truthfully from her own standpoint, which was agnostic, but with a large measure of imaginative understanding for the child's attitude, to the effect that she thought God might be—and many people thought this—something like a father, who could do and know very wonderful things, but people like herself and him and even his own father, who could do so many wonderful things also and was so beloved, could not possibly understand much about it. Later on, he would have more thoughts himself and they would talk it over again. Whether this was a satisfactory answer or no, is another question, but, as she rather ruefully told me, it was the very best she could do.

The boy, a very happy and intelligent child, departed, satisfied, it seemed, to play in the

garden. About ten minutes later he came rushing in, dragging behind him his large grey elephant mounted on wheels, and asked eagerly : "Do you think God is rather like my elephant?" This startling query was difficult to meet, but the mother answered : "Well, yes, perhaps in this way : You know the elephant is the most powerful of all animals, is obeyed and admired by all of them, and can do many things the others can't, with his trunk and feet, so he is above all the others, as some people believe God is above all of us." The boy was most pleased, and danced around gaily, saying, "God is like my elephant : I love my elephant—he's very, very clever, you know, *much* cleverer than you, Mummy." Again he ran out to play in the garden. Only a little later, his mother went to look for him and found him sitting on the grass, crying. Reluctantly, he finally brought out : "I don't want God ; I hate him ; he can hurt me like the nasty old elephant," and so saying he got up and with much vigour and malice knocked over the elephant and kicked it repeatedly as it lay on the ground. Here,

plain to see, are powerful feelings at work : a mingling of the desire for the omnipotent god-figure, satisfaction in identifying it with himself (it was this which so pleased him in connexion with *his* elephant), and fear of its power, expressed in his resentment against the elephant-god, behind which stands his real father.

Yet in the presentation given by the mother, as well as in his actual relations to both his parents, no trace of conscious threat or fear-inspiring ideas was to be found.

In the foregoing considerations concerning various fundamental behaviour-problems (partial only, owing to space-limitations) I have tried to show how deeply the unconscious emotions of love and hate, fear and revenge, influence the child and adult in mutual reaction. From which it follows that the specific actions can never rightly be regarded as isolated phenomena appearing without apparent cause ; they are symptomatic of a situation which involves the whole personality, directly and indirectly, whose cause is far-reaching and deep-lying. Only from such a view-point

can we interpret and, if necessary, help in the formation of fresh and more advantageous adaptations.

Through the kindness of the headmistress of a well-known London School, I have been furnished with a list of those specific behaviour-difficulties which she finds most recurring and most obstructive in her school (for children from three to eight years of age or so). Its intrinsic interest, of a high degree, is increased if we consider it in the light of unconscious motivation. One of the first in the list is *antagonistic* behaviour among the children in the form of fighting, slapping, scratching, biting, knocking down each other, for no apparent reason. We learn that this anti-attitude lasts longer in boys than in girls, and among the former fighting and warring and scrapping remain the favourite occupation until the ages of seven or eight, though usually controlled within the actual school-precincts. The children here concerned come from a humble social stratum, in the main, and doubtless in a school drawing from a higher level this antagonistic

behaviour might be less violent and less overt, but the general weight of evidence seems to suggest that the differences are not very marked. It is true that certain systems claim that such hostile attitudes are non-existent among their pupils, and this may well be so if we judge from the observed external behaviour, but its deeper truth can only be established if we penetrate further below this level. But to return to the fighting and warring seven-year-olds and the two questions which at once present themselves in this connexion. We are bound to ask, in the first place, to what extent is this attitude one which expresses a real demand and need of the child, a stage through which he must go before he can satisfactorily enter upon his next phase ; in the second place, to what extent is it possible, mindful of the community's claims and the child's own various necessities, to allow the active expression of hostile impulses ? These are inevitable queries, and though to some small extent we have answered them, there is still much to seek.

Unless we can be content with a facile



putting-aside of the problem, the first query can, I think, be partially answered from the knowledge we have already acquired. We do know that the child invariably has hostile impulses, however much concealed from himself and others, as part and parcel of his earliest conflicts ; unless these are free to express themselves to some appropriate degree and so get resolved, leaving the way clear for the equally authentic affectional social impulses, there is likely to be an excess of the adverse emotions resulting in the antagonistic behaviour described, and increased in proportion as he is forced to behave, externally, in respectable submissive manner. That seems an argument for anti-social obstreperous behaviour, some may conclude. By no means ; but it is an argument for recognition of what is there, in order to *adjust* it so that the individual may be the controller of, rather than be controlled by, the more primitive elements of his being. We may very well question if the earliest stages of life, say up to three or four years of age, should not allow as fully as *may be* (that is, as is compatible with real

interests, not with merely conventional ones, or those dictated by the adults' anti-feelings) freedom of instinctual wishes and actions, with a view to a later more capable control over these. And here, indeed, is possible argument, which appears to have escaped the notice of even the educational disputants in the matter, against school life, of even the most enlightened type, for children at this early age—namely, that the freedom which they should, and could, enjoy in the home (I speak, of course, of the home of averagely civilized conditions) is impossible in any school, Montessori or other, either from the external situation created from large numbers and collective ideals, or owing to the inner reactions which, willy-nilly, are evoked by this environment in the child's unconscious ; as for example, too great sense of authority, and too great stimulus from his fellows.

It is perfectly true that to some degree the problem of antagonism has been tackled by creating substitute-expressions for it—as in the well-known device of games, sports, competitions, various forms of active rivalry, and that

system which forms, perhaps, one of the best of all such substitutes, the Scout movement—but we have to learn how far and how satisfactorily these are real replacements, not mere substitutes (margarine is often used as a substitute for butter, but, as every doctor knows, it cannot replace the latter), and we are hardly at the beginning of such knowledge yet. Let me turn again to the “difficulty-list.”

Next on the difficulty-list figures the tendency to steal, often very prevalent among these young children. They take each other's lunches and sweets, hair-ribbons, slides, pence, and, if opportunity provides, any of the brightly-coloured objects used in class, such as chalks, counters, plasticene, the younger quite openly carrying them off, the older ones usually trying to conceal their thefts.

In so far as this is the normal desire of the very young child for any attractive object he sees (similar to his instinctive tendency to put things into his mouth) intensified by external circumstances of deprivation, this is a “problem” only as regards organization and the presence of large numbers—a very

real one certainly in that light ! When, as quite often happens, it persists to a later age, and is regarded by the child himself as guilt, it is a symptom of inner conflict and must be dealt with as such, certainly not with retaliatory punishments. It is most often the visible sign of hostility springing from fear and jealousy, unconscious emotions connected with the child's fantasies about his parents, his relations to them, and his dread of punishment in consequence of those feelings and wishes. Such a situation can only be dealt with individually, and analytic investigation has, happily, proved of the greatest value in discovering and readjusting the hidden factors. It seems clear that the more the child is enabled to convince himself of his adequacy and power, apart from any comparison with that of others, the more he will be able to transform his guilt-sense, and thus lose the need for hostile reactions ; hence the Montessori method, and others based upon the system of individual chosen work, would seem to be very much on suitable lines in respect to this matter. For the extreme case a careful analysis is the most useful and hopeful

treatment, and the teacher can serve the child in such case by calling upon the expert analyst's advice.

The matter of lying which figures on this list as a very big problem (it is held by my informant that seventy-five per cent. of children under seven years of age lie constantly in some form or other) is allied to the stealing question, but shows even more widespread ramifications, and it is wholly impossible to do more here than point out two or three of its aspects. Some of this lying tendency is inherent in the child's situation as child, its smallness and defencelessness in relation to the adult, and according as the latter makes external authority more or less oppressive (whether through force or a too-great idealism), so the child's lying will be greater or smaller.

It must be noted that very much, in an astonishingly short space of time, is demanded of the child in the way of self-control, of sacrifice of his dearest impulses, of altruistic feeling, and school-life, of whatever type, must make a bigger demand than the average home-life (again a possible argument against school

for the "under-five" children). Some of these demands, which the child both resists and welcomes, can only be met by what we adults call lying, otherwise the consequences, at all events in the child's belief, would be too catastrophic. It is amazing to find, when there is an opportunity for any investigation below the surface, how powerful is the child's fantasy of the grown-up's lofty virtue, wisdom, and general perfection—an ideal standard which he strives despairingly to reach, an impossible achievement without the aid of distortion and concealment on his part. The same child-attitude in the adult reveals itself strikingly in the course of Analysis, where the patients perpetually credit the analyst with the most exalted standards in every direction, refusing to reveal their own thoughts and wishes on the plea: "You [i.e. the analyst] would disapprove of me so strongly if I said what I really thought."

Hence one source of the child's lying; which can be lessened if the parent and teacher become more able to bridge this gulf. Yet the problem remains: for the child has need

of the all-virtuous, omniscient parent-figure to whose standard it painfully seeks to attain, and it becomes a question of compromise between the two needs—a compromise which is, of course, effected to great degree by the fact of the child having, as well as parents and teachers, other relationships of a more intermediate standard, that is, with brothers and sisters, school-fellows, and adults of less emotional significance.

Other so-called lying may be the outcome of the child's fantasy-life, his way of expressing his curiosity, his fears, his misunderstandings, and as such we must learn to interpret it. I can give but one illustration of this—everyone is familiar with a score of others.

A child of seven, quite intelligent, entrusted by his mother with pence to get a loaf of bread from round the corner, on several occasions rushed back declaring that he was afraid to go into the shop, as "there's a man outside who won't let me go in, and he says he'll hit me if I do." The evidence proved that there was no such man, and no obstacle of any kind whatever ; it seemed a case of sense-

less invention. As he indulged in other kinds of more troublesome lying (bringing similar tales against bigger boys at school), he was brought to an analyst, and it turned out that his lying was the outcome of his own fears—fears which had no visible cause, and for which he was forced to find an objective reason, the reason he produced pointing unmistakably to the unconscious causation—a fear of the father (the threatening man and boy).

The problems involved in what is called “inattention,” “dreaminess,” “lack of interest,” “inability to concentrate,” are even more pressing than the questions of lying and thieving, and they are certainly more widespread and less dependent, it would seem, on external environment. If we set aside the influence of factors so commonly met with in children coming from the poorer classes, such as insufficient food, insanitary and unhealthy housing, poor stock, and neglected health, we still find, on every social level, the children who manifest the qualities mentioned above. And such children are by no means necessarily stupid or even dull; they may often be



characterized by sharpness and acuteness in many directions. But in all such cases a fantasy-life, overt or repressed, is forming the obstacle to attention and concentration, and it is hopeless to seek to alter the situation unless and until the fantasies can be revealed and comprehended. Briefly put, there is nearly always to be found either a situation of "refusal," based on a sense of guilt and accompanying fear (that is, the child has withdrawn from efforts and achievements in the reality world, in fear of disappointment or of punishment) ; or the real interest, behind the manifest lack of interest and of attention, is a guilty one—some ungratified, more infantile preoccupation—which must get an outlet under cover of other activities, disturbing and vitiating the consciously realized interest.

It is striking to discover how many children (and adults also) are perpetually preoccupied, sometimes quite unaware, sometimes aware yet powerless to prevent, with mental processes underlying the manifest one which occupies them consciously. For instance, a child of ten was ceaselessly weaving patterns

of a specific kind whenever he began to do any thinking—arithmetical calculation, algebraic problems, and so on. He had no idea of any meaning attached to his patterns, he merely saw them in the air before his eyes and could not drive them away. An analysis gave some clue, for the patterns showed themselves to be connected with his very earliest experiences in connexion with bitter jealous hostilities in relation to his younger brother and mother's decided preference for the latter. A youth of sixteen found himself constantly occupied (though but slightly aware of his own activity until an illness brought it more prominently to consciousness) in tracing mentally, and even sometimes making finger-movements, the figure eight lying on its side ( $\infty$ ) a habit devoid of all meaning to himself. Again, analysis gave a clue, revealing the "eight" as a disguised form of a subject which had been a very important, but ungratified, interest to him from his very early years. A girl of seven was found to be perpetually day-dreaming of one image which ran as an undercurrent to all her mental life: she saw herself in a great room,

sitting on a kind of throne, with a man by her side, and many people round saluting her. This recurring picture, when interpreted, revealed itself as an epitome of her deepest wishes and revenges.

The energy absorbed in all this activity of the mental "underworld" is of a high and intense degree and effectually lessens the amount left free to devote to the conscious tasks, just as the obtruding images and emotions they excite increase the difficulty of keeping clear the trains of conscious thought and endeavour. It follows that much of the defective mental functioning in human beings can only be remedied when the obscuring and distorting undergrowth (the profounder sphere of activity) is either removed or turned to use : and this is the aim and function of the analytic procedure.

## *Chapter IV*

### EMOTION AND ITS RELATION TO INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

How unconscious emotions hinder intellectual processes—Fantasy as an expression of unconscious emotions—The influence of fantasy in problems of Interest, Memory, Concentration, and Accuracy

It is a commonplace that when we are under the influence of any strong conscious emotion our mental processes are liable to be interfered with. In a state of acute anxiety we cannot easily think or concentrate ; in joyous excitement we are apt to ignore or confuse any matters less interesting ; an emotion of guilt may entirely hinder our ability to comprehend even simple words, or to observe what is before our eyes. This we all know and experience at times. It has been the work of Freud to show us the same state of affairs operating in much disguised form in connexion with the whole of mental life, and in relation to unconscious emotions as well as to conscious ones.

From which discovery we are enabled to recognize that the emotional life, expressed in impulses and wishes, is of greater dynamic significance than the so-called intellectual life which we have hitherto placed in the first rank of importance in the make-up of the civilized individual, and further that the latter, the mental life, is dependent upon the former (the emotional life).

It is perhaps necessary here to return for a moment to the fundamental principle of human development, investigated by Freud with such illuminating results—namely, that the larger mass of the instinctual impulse-life in each individual with its pleasures, fears, and wishes, unable to obtain expression (and therefore gratification) in direct conscious form owing to external and internal prohibition (due to the unsuitability of this “mass” for cultural civilized ends), becomes repressed into the unconscious and obtains contact with consciousness only in highly disguised forms, in fantasy, or in the way of conflict, influencing the individual’s behaviour in varying ways. Every possible opportunity for expression is sought by the repressed emotional impulses,

and always with a view to gratification without danger, hence the seemingly "harmless" outlets via "mental" channels, sufficiently remote from the original sphere of operations. This process, involving transference and translation of emotion, is profound and complex, presenting many problems for solution and interpretation. It may be compared, by a very rough analogy, to the complicated outflow of a mountain spring, which, gathering volume as it goes, spreads its ramifications in every direction, some above ground, some far below, sometimes in a steady continuous stream, at other times interrupted and dammed up into whirlpools and waterfalls, quite unrecognizable, at any given moment, as part of and dependent upon those far-off head-waters, which yet remain for ever their source of life. We have to learn to recognize the emotional conflicts displaying themselves far afield, as it were, under such disguised forms as mental disabilities, deficiencies, distortions, as well as in the more direct forms of aggressive anti-social behaviour or definite neurosis.

Such inhibiting mechanism can be seen at

work in ordinary daily life and in all spheres, but is all too often taken for granted among us. Take, for instance, our forgetfulnesses or confusions in relation to small debts, to appointments, to obligations which are incurred, to work which is distasteful, and similar everyday affairs. How is it, we may ask, that a usually good memory can play its owner so false as to "forget" completely a sum of money we owe, and yet keep vividly in mind the debt still owing by a friend? Or what can account, in the case of one with excellent hearing and orderliness of mind, for so strange a confusion that he fails entirely to keep his early appointment, affirming in all sincerity that he understood it was an hour later? Or again, why do most of us manage without difficulty to carry safely about through the day's work and travel our own precious library volume, or still more precious gift-book, yet most unfortunately leave behind in tube or 'bus a borrowed book the property of a friend?<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps if these somewhat trivial cases may serve to illustrate the essential dependence of

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (Fisher Unwin, London, 1914)

so-called "mental" operations upon emotional factors, still more we may expect to find such dependence to hold good in the case of far more complex processes which are "intellectual" in the recognized sense of that word. The academic psychologists who investigated the processes of remembering and forgetting long before Freud had reached his discoveries believed that we forget the things which were difficult and remembered those which were easy, according to the "line of least resistance" reaction, but this theory has been exploded by the widespread observation that we just as frequently, if not more frequently, forget the most elementary matters (such as our friends' names, or the destination to which we are travelling at the very moment) and those completely familiar to us, while remembering difficult and obscure facts.

The true explanation lies in the emotional aspect of the particular memory and its unconscious associations : if the latter are too painful, then the connected fact must not be suffered to emerge, since it would drag in its train the tabooed ideas — or rather their emotional



aspects. Hence a specific name, or date, or incident, or face may be "forgotten," not necessarily on account of any inherent difficulty, but owing to painful unconscious associations, directly or indirectly connected with it—in other words, the forgetting is not due to a mental process but to an emotional one. Repressed love and hate, guilt with its accompanying fears, curiosity—these are all important agents in disturbing, or even preventing, intellectual processes, and therefore an understanding of these forces and their manifestations in behaviour is essential to the educator.

The following examples from cases which have been analysed will help to illustrate what has already been said, but it must be remembered that it is impossible, owing to limitations of space, to give more than summary conclusions representing the results of long and often laborious research which was confirmed at every point by indisputable first-hand evidence from the patient's own mind.

The first case concerns a boy of nine and a half in the first form of a secondary day-school, who at the time of his analysis (at the

age of ten and a quarter) had been at school for close on three terms. This was his first experience of any school—he had up to then been taught at home by his mother—and he was about six months older than the average age of his class, but highly gifted and responsive and in certain directions very much in advance of his class-mates. Difficulty, however, soon arose in connexion with the geography lessons and geography teacher: the boy showed strong dislike for both, and inability to do his tasks. He complained at home that the teacher was disagreeable, the lesson very difficult—he could not understand the meaning of a map at all—and that nothing of any interest was taught. From this he passed on to inattention and naughtiness in class, so that his report at end of term showed him at the bottom of the class in position and severely censured him for bad behaviour. It was clear that some conflict must be at work, and when the same state of affairs continued during his second term in the class, his parents felt the matter was serious. The child therefore came for analytic treatment, and in the course of

some months' analysis the following discoveries were made.

At first the boy was very uncommunicative, only reiterating that his geography lessons were "so dull" and "so difficult," and the teacher was "always cross." [It may here be noted that independent information obtained on all these points entirely disproved his statements: the teacher was very efficient, quite amiably disposed to her pupils, and the geography class was popular with the children.] By degrees, by means of the analytic technique and the growing transference, the child expressed himself more freely and showed much pleasure in a book lent him by the analyst which dealt in a simple way with the origins of peoples, their distribution over the globe, and the relationships between various races. From this stage he began to yield up some of his more intimate thoughts, foremost of which was this: How do differences among peoples come about? Why are there white, yellow, red, or black men? A matter, he complained, that his geography-teacher had never talked about. It was clear that he was

here touching upon something of importance, though only in veiled form.

Still further freeing by means of the Analysis led him to cast away the disguise, and to come some stages nearer his real enquiry—namely, what was the difference between man and woman, and how did it result? But it was not without much delay and anxiety that he was able at last to put this problem to the analyst. Still he had not faced the far more important problem which lay behind this query, and it was only after much questioning by him, to which always the analyst replied with the fullest and plainest information, that his deeply repressed emotion was released, at first manifested in the form of great hostility to the hitherto admired and loved confidant, his analyst. That emotion was found to be the outcome of his *Œdipus*-conflict—his love and hate towards his parents. Behind the query “What was the difference between men and women?” which, as may be supposed, was not in the least unanswerable, in its general elementary sense, by this exceptionally gifted boy of ten years old, lay his unconscious

disappointed love-emotion in regard to the mother and his jealous anger against his father. Not, "What is the difference between men and women?" is his genuine preoccupation, but, "Why should there be this hateful and bitter disappointment for me, namely, that I am not allowed to hold first place with my mother, but must needs be thrust out on account of my father and baby brother?" And accompanying such feelings was a painful sense of guilt built up from a very idealistic and sensitive nature.

It will seem, no doubt, that we have travelled far from the original problem, namely, the child's anti-attitude towards his geography, and this is true in one sense, for the ramifications of unconscious emotion, just as in the case of the mountain spring, penetrate far and wide and deep. Nevertheless the amazing appropriateness and adaptation of the conscious manifestations to their source can also be traced, though such a task involves patient investigation. Here a few points only can be revealed. The earlier history of the boy was as follows. For the first years of his life

he had been the beloved only child of an affectionate mother and an equally affectionate, though shy and reserved father, who all unknowingly had inspired the child with a good deal of awe. A brother was born when the child was four years old, at a critical stage of conflict engendered by the clash between his strongly-developed emotional attitude to the parents, in which fear and hostility to the father was a marked feature, and his equally strong idealistic temperament. His jealousy, unconscious and conscious, towards the new arrival (behind which lurked still more significant unconscious emotions directed against his father) was repressed and disguised under the form of a solicitous love, an attitude which revealed to an experienced eye a too-strong anxiety element.

The analysis disclosed his fears concerning his brother during the latter's first year of life : he would, for instance, often creep out of his own small bed at night, cross over to the baby's cot, and peer anxiously in to see if all was right, fearing, he explained, that the baby might get suffocated by lying on his face,

or choke with wind (having heard the nurse-maid talk in such strain). These and numerous other instances of fear were divulged to no one, and his personal life between the ages of four and eight presented a smooth surface, accompanied by exceptional mental activity: the latter, no doubt, acting as a kind of safety-valve for the repressed emotions. At the age of eight came the first important change in his circumstances since the birth of his brother—his school-life began, and with this began also the manifestation in consciousness of his hitherto securely locked-up painful love- and hate-impulses. The sending to school (to a child's unconscious so often a symbol of punishment for guilt, a casting out from the parental love) and the whole educational process (again, often taken by the unconscious as a deprivation of personality) afforded a suitable opportunity for the revivifying and breaking-through of the feelings which had attached themselves to the birth of his younger brother, springing out of which we see his anti-social attitude to his younger class-mates. Such feelings belonged primarily to his sexual

curiosity and jealousy towards his parents and their intimate relationship from which he was excluded ; thoughts and wishes which the boy felt to be guilty and deserving of punishment, yet full of exciting and pleasurable interest.

The maps involved in his geographical work represented to his unconscious the forbidden land which he guiltily wished, yet feared, to investigate. In passing, it might be well to remind those interested how appropriately a map, itself a symbol, can symbolize the human body and how clearly we can observe this symbolization<sup>1</sup> process in the names bestowed on geographical features, such as headland, shoulder, head, nose, and so forth.

The teacher was for him the mother-substitute, whose silence concerning the origin of peoples and the relationships between diverse peoples was a repetition of the taboo laid by

1 Symbolism

Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (see Index).

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed) (see Index)

Abraham, *Selected Papers on Psycho-analysis* (see Index)

Ferenczi, *Contributions to Psycho-analysis* (spec ch. X).



the mother (so his own fantasy interpreted it) upon the subject of deepest interest to himself ; she permitted only knowledge on matters of indifference, hence the "dull" lessons he complained of. His unconscious anger on this account creates his rude and obstructive manifest behaviour, which serves at one and the same time to punish himself (for he is "unable" to do his work or shine intellectually and he is also regarded as unsatisfactory in conduct) and to avoid the temptation of indulging in the desired investigation, both aims operating unconsciously. Had he been able to gratify his own "guilty" curiosity, he would have suffered less, but his ideal, based upon the parent figures, restrained him from ever knowing its existence. The further course of analysis enabled the boy to see something of his own antagonistic feelings towards parents and brother in addition to the love of which he was aware, and by releasing them much weakened their influence ; further, he was able to face his curiosity and to realize that it was not "guilty," but an emotion common to everyone at the beginning of life, and of

great value if turned to real use, that is, to help him to real knowledge and understanding of the world in which he lived.

The end of the analysis showed a marked adaptation in the child: he lost his dislike of the geography lessons, became quite efficient in the subject and most friendly to the teacher. Now, at the age of sixteen, he gives promise of excellent scientific ability, mainly in the direction of biology and physiology.

I have touched upon only a small proportion of the important associations involved, owing to lack of space, but before passing on one more must be noted, since it well illustrates how delicately and yet how powerfully on the one hand the child reacts to his external environment, and on the other how strikingly he moulds that environment to suit his inner needs. A memory, till then forgotten, was recalled during analysis concerning an event on the very day of the younger brother's birth. Towards his bedtime, the child had been left alone for some time and had scrambled on to a chair to reach down from the bookshelf in the sitting-room a heavy

illustrated Encyclopædia which he was never allowed to touch by himself. In getting down, the chair rocked and the big book fell with a thud out of his hands to the ground. The nursemaid came running in and scolded the child, saying: "You naughty boy to make such a noise, disturbing your Mamma and the poor dear baby." (These were the words as he had remembered them.) After telling him that if he made another sound he should have no supper, she went off, leaving the child alone for a long time, or so it seemed to him, to look at the pictures in the coveted Encyclopædia, among which was a very fascinating map of the mediæval world.

The incident with the tabooed book, the "guilt" of which was intensified by the maid's (comparatively mild) scolding, linked itself to his conscious antagonistic feelings towards the new-comer, the cause of his own "cast-out" situation, and still more served to heighten the unconscious guilt-feelings. Thus we have two seemingly slight external events—the book incident and the maid's scolding—unconsciously selected to play

important rôles in the drama of his emotions ; but having taken these from his environment, he invests them with an emotional colouring supplied from his inner life, transforming them into evidences of guilt and the punishment which such guilt brings in its train.

Apart from its intrinsic interest, I have given this case for two main reasons. First, it is an illustration of an internal conflict without any crude environmental causation. It is true that intensive analytical investigation always reveals external elements which have contributed to the conflict, but no indictment could be made in regard to " bad " environment in its grosser sense, such as unloving or markedly over-indulgent parents, disharmony between the parents, patent deception towards the child, sudden alternation of circumstances, or special hardship. Just as it is essential to remember that an unfavourable environment (and in early environment perhaps the most potent factor of all is that of the parents or parent-substitutes) will inevitably tend to produce the " difficult " and maladjusted child, or even the out-and-out " delinquent," as Dr. Cyril

Burt's illuminating work *The Delinquent Child* has shown, so it is equally necessary to realize that, be the environment as seemingly favourable as possible, the mental conflicts of the child may still develop to a pronounced degree. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," and it may often be impossible to predict with what issue the individual will resolve his fundamental problems. At all events, it is a matter for satisfaction and hope that psycho-analytic knowledge and treatment have already achieved far-reaching and valuable results with the young.

The second reason for which I selected this case is that the subject of it is, as we say, a quite "average" intelligent child who can serve as a representative of the great majority of mankind and also can dispel the erroneous but widespread idea that psycho-analysis should, and does concern itself only with the "abnormal" individual child or adult. Even if it were true that psycho-analytic research has thrown light primarily upon "diseased," distorted, exceptional, or hitherto inexplicable human manifestations, it would still apply

to mankind as a whole, since we are all peculiar or distorted in some respect or other ; but in fact the truth is quite otherwise. Psycho-analysis has something to say in every sphere of the human spirit : its loves and hates, hopes and despairs, beliefs and doubts, its superstitious fears and its complex thinking, its failures, its highest flights of artistic and spiritual creation, alongside with its grossest and most turbulent passions—all these are illuminated for us by an understanding of unconscious motivation and mechanism. Therefore it is of importance in its bearing on mankind, that is in regard to any and every man, and since the “ordinary” man forms the majority of us, it follows that this “average” human being and his further development must constitute the main consideration of psycho-analytic research. That tendency, always in man, to rebut new ideas and new methods, and to make liberal compensation for his anti-attitude in certain selected spheres, seems strikingly apparent in the present stage of our civilization.

Thus we have the spectacle of numbers of people tolerating psycho-analysis so long as

it does not give help to those who are best able to make use of it, that is the ordinary individual with averagely good potentialities. I am here reminded of the grim saying of a high official of a great Educational Authority, who declared that only when you were, or became, a mental or physical defective or a delinquent of criminal tendencies could you get the attentions and benefits (financial and otherwise) of the high authority in question : given such circumstances, you might be their special beloved charge from cradle to grave ; but were you a plain ordinary citizen, child or adult, going about your own business as best you knew how—a tragically poor best perhaps—you might suffer and die without a finger raised on your behalf. Allowing for exaggeration, there is truth in such a view, and it is this obscurantist attitude which psychoanalysis seeks to destroy, and to substitute for it an old ideal, "Prevention is better than cure."

The case I have dealt with presents an admixture of an intellectual hold-up (inability to understand and carry out the geographical

work), and maladjusted behaviour (the antagonistic attitude at home and at school). I will now take examples of more definite *mental* manifestation, such as are very familiar to all concerned with training or teaching the young. One such is the *inability to progress beyond a certain stage*, even though progress up to that stage has been entirely normal, perhaps even exceptionally swift and brilliant. A break-down of this kind which I treated, in the case not of a child but of a young girl aged fifteen and a half years, revealed a very deep emotional conflict having its more immediate source in the revival of a guilty curiosity-situation which had led her at the age of five to play certain forbidden games with a little boy companion, for which she had already been punished by her mother, but had continued to indulge in under a great sense of fear, often precipitately breaking off on the point of detection. As always, such fear and pleasure linked itself to the unconscious guilt-sense, thereby maintaining its vigour and dynamic force. Repression had acted as a "forgetting" force, and the stage from six



to thirteen years of age had been marked by a too-rapid mental development (in itself often a symptom of some emotional maladjustment).

At fourteen, with the onset of adolescence and its physical and mental changes, the emotional conflict had been revived, aided by a close attachment to a woman teacher with somewhat austere and lofty theories of conduct, who served very well as a mother-figure, and at the same time by an ardent interest, unadmitted to herself, in a school-friend's brother (representing to her unconscious the companion of her long-ago guilty pleasures). For about nine months the conflict expressed itself in a still more zealous attachment to work and self-sacrifice, culminating at fifteen in the drying-up of mental energy and power ; it was as though the unconscious said : " If I allow myself any forward movement, any gratification of my emotional sexual feelings, then at once I am in danger of a catastrophe and a punishment will descend upon me (as in the old days of the guilty game, ever on the verge of detection by the severe mother) ; there is only one way of escape : neither in

wish nor thought nor deed may I go a step further."

Somewhat similar to the foregoing case but with certain distinctive features is the mental difficulty which expresses itself in the form of an *inability to deal with any kind of problem*, although there may be normal power in handling any plain and straightforward issue. In a case of adult analysis, this was the difficulty which the patient, a woman rather over forty at the time of her analysis, had experienced since the age of eight years. At school she had been entirely unable to work out the simplest kind of arithmetical or algebraical problem, although extremely quick in dealing with plain examples of rules: similarly in drawing, making plasticene maps, cutting out or putting together garments, or in simple scientific experiments she was entirely baffled and perpetually asked herself, without finding an answer, "How shall I begin?" Yet she was intellectually very quick in understanding, of marked literary and artistic tastes, and quite capable in ordinary affairs of life. As it was

short period, chiefly owing to a change in her work, the specific links were never established, but it did become clear that she suffered from a powerful unconscious fear of using her hands, feet, eyes, her body as a whole, and arising from that her mental 'sight' in relation to anything which was obscure, that is, a problem ; and this fear begotten of her own sense of guilt was linked up with her fantasies in relation to mother and father. It is interesting to note that any mysterious tale, detective story, or riddle was at once a delight and yet a paralysing thing, and she told me she did not think that she had solved a simple riddle even once in her life.

A state of confusion leading to *inaccurate observation, hearing, or reproduction* may be brought about by strong emotional disturbance in the unconscious. So much of the child's very early life is preoccupied with curiosity and fear concerning the sights, sounds, and doings connected with the grown-ups, especially his parents, that there is ample opportunity for guilty feelings to attach themselves to the acts of seeing, hearing, repeating, and remem-

bering. So we have the child (or adult) who sees everything partially, or incorrectly, the one who invariably hears the wrong words, another who never can carry correctly the simplest message nor copy down reliably the simplest names. *Lack of concentration* is mainly due to a pushing away of the given train of thought by another thought or thoughts. The substituted thought or picture crops up again and again, preventing or distracting the thoughts already there, and the latter are broken up and can only be reformed at the cost of much greater expenditure of energy. A patient found himself prevented from thought by the interference of patterns which shaped themselves before his eyes or traced themselves on the cornices of the ceiling or appeared in the fabric of the carpet. This is the case commonly with children who set out to listen to the lesson the teacher is giving or to prepare some work from a book, and before many minutes are past have their minds occupied with images of a quite different kind, even before they are at all aware of what is going on.

One instance of this kind is of a boy of ten, very conscientious and diligent; who was constantly waking from a dreamy state in the class-room to find he had missed all that was going on round him. Naturally he was often in trouble in consequence of this inattention, yet could not get the better of his dreaming habit. The analysis disclosed that he was perpetually tracing with his mind's eye a heart-shaped figure in various positions, sizes, and colourings. The child had no explanation to offer, and it was only after a fairly long search that the matter was unravelled. The figure was the form in which he was expressing his unconscious interest and feeling concerning a tabooed activity of a much earlier stage (at an age between three and four), and in this highly disguised, and therefore "innocent" manner, he could maintain his more primitive enjoyment; had he become aware of what was going on, his highly developed conscience and conscientiousness must have either rejected this enjoyment or suffered too much in gratifying it.

A more common type of distraction, powerful to prevent mental concentration and continuity of thought, is the indulgence of some bodily habit, such as fidgeting with fingers or feet, fingering buttons or some portions of dress, scribbling with a pencil, scratching the head, rubbing some surface of the body, and all these things are manifestations of emotional conflicts, often of a highly complex kind. Most teachers know that a very large percentage of youngish children indulge in such habits unless restrained by external or inner compulsion. But they do not always realize what a mass of energy is being used up in such conflicts (expressed in the already-mentioned so-called "bad-habits"), nor that the prevention of manifest expression by no means necessarily extinguishes activity : it may be merely a question of a more disguised form of expression, more repressed and more "mental," and therefore likely to be still more influential in emotional and intellectual directions. In this connexion, a consideration already touched upon in the previous chapter must be again emphasized—namely, how

essential it is for the teacher, above all the teacher of quite young children, to revise current ideas as to child-behaviour. For a too-early and too-hastily-acquired standard of decorous civilized conduct may be highly disadvantageous, both by preventing the child from developing harmoniously and by disguising from the educator the indications of the child's real trends.

To turn to another type of so-called "intellectual" difficulty, an inability to produce his knowledge or make use of his powers, often displayed by the "shy," "nervous," or "unready" child, is usually, as in the former examples cited, a consequence of emotional disturbance. This was exemplified in the case of a man who as child, boy, and later as adult, found the utmost difficulty in speaking, either in his class-room or in taking part in a school-entertainment, or later in public meetings. It was found that the main impulses involved were first a fear of some exposure culminating in disaster (or as he first put it, the public speaking was a critical test in which he felt he was bound to fail, however much his reason

pointed to the contrary); secondly, a great sense of jealous rivalry which forced him always to compare himself with the most brilliant and distinguished exponent present—perhaps the head boy of the whole school, or the chief orator of the College Union, or a famous political speaker, known throughout England; in other words, behind his “nervous” and “retiring” manifestations an extreme narcissism predominated, though this latter was itself only a symptom. Both the exposure-idea with its resultant danger and the sense of rivalry were linked to primitive early wishes, the former in connexion with his own body and the body of his mother (exposing, looking, touching), and the latter with jealous feeling towards his father, both of which must bring punishment in their train—the punishment of being unable to make use of his own abilities. When he was able to relinquish, on the one hand, his sense of guilt (so that now he could “expose” himself in the form of forceful and even eloquent speech), and on the other his rivalry with a father-figure (so that he ceased to put



up an exalted standard for himself and was content to achieve something obviously respectable), he found himself able, with increasing power, to make quite good use of his knowledge in debating and lecturing.

From a somewhat similar basis, many people are unable to gain success in examinations; some cannot bring themselves even to enter for one. It has been found again and again that the examination is, to the unconscious, a test of personal validity, and that strong guilt-feelings (derived from emotional conflict concerning the parent-relation and the individual's primitive interests) may render such a test a thing of dread terror. This is the meaning, symbolically expressed, of all those tests of skill and valour which form the subject-matter of mythology and folk-lore. Hercules is able to accomplish his almost incredible "labours," which none before him could even attempt, because he is free from guilt (hence without fear or doubt) owing to his miraculous birth, endowing him with complete potency in the cradle, and he has no father-rival to fear. Similarly, Siegfried is enabled to slay

the hitherto unconquerable dragon, Fafnir, and so forth.

If the child is to be able to use *his* power and potency in whatever direction is needful and desirable, he also must get free from his guilt-fears which create ever-recurring dangers in his path, and from which a compelling-force urges him to flee, even while the very dangers produce pleasurable intensity of feeling, to the shelter of "inability," "confusion," "nervousness," and even "naughtiness."

A last illustration concerns the well-known manifestations of untidiness, dirtiness, and muddle in the child's work and general behaviour, all of which may perhaps be classed as part of mental development. There is little question that such symptoms, merely regarded as things in themselves, constitute both for child and adult the most disadvantageous of the lesser human ills, but as wasters of energy they assume still larger importance. Always they are linked to the earliest instinctual pleasures, which themselves gain added significance and complexity by becoming a part of the fabric which later is woven out of the

relationship between the child and his parents, and out of the reactions between his inner life and the general external environment.

A girl of nine years old, whom lately I have known, of marked intellectual development, an omnivorous reader, very grown-up in much of her behaviour, is, nevertheless, quite incapable of doing any small piece of writing, painting, or needle-work without blots, smudges, crumplings, and knots, and her material, of whatever kind, is invariably crumpled, dirty, and in some way spoilt soon after she handles it. In consequence she hates all such occupations, dodges them whenever possible, and has already, at the early age of nine, built up within herself powerful inhibitions, which have extended to activities she enjoys (or would enjoy were she free to do so), such as dancing, swimming, games, at which she is clumsy and inefficient. From a slight observation it was clear that she lived largely in day-dreams, and the content of these revealed two absorbing trends: one, a fantasy of herself as rich, beautiful, brilliant, admired by all and sundry, often in the rôle of a princess

or other high-born lady ; the other, preoccupation with functional interests, in a highly disguised form, coupled with frequent catastrophes and perils at the hands of alarming things—large animals, ogres, and so forth.

Evidently this was a case of a child who had too early abandoned direct gratification of the urgent instinctual pleasures by becoming the ultra-civilized grown-up and decorous personality—thus following the mother's pattern, as the child, at all events, conceived it—thereby winning great meed of admiration (the wonderful figure of her fantasies), and in compensation must express these abandoned impulses in some indirect form—in her blots, her grubby methods and general slovenliness. The unconscious revenge-wish for the denial of urgent impulses, even though it be a self-imposed denial, always expresses itself in some form or other, cunningly camouflaged, and so in this case. The child's tiresome slovenliness, on the one hand the manifestation of her instinctual anal interests, on the other hand serves as a punishment to the grown-ups, since it gives them much trouble and displeasure.

It is not possible to deal with the many other important issues involved, such as jealousy of a younger sister who is neat and dainty and clever in all physical activities, and her own bodily clumsiness, which is a way of punishing herself, by inhibition in one direction, for those impulses in another direction which she does indulge, either in fantasy (dreams and day-dreams) or in various substitute actions, but never in direct acts.

The cases already taken, though but partially presented, will reveal sufficiently that lack of mental capacity or its maladjustment proceeds from an emotional situation, which latter is seen in action in the guise of fantasy, expressing itself in every conceivable form. It is a strange reflection that most commonly the educational process pursues its way, unaware of the existence even of the individual's most important aspects, much less able to interpret them. Yet without a clue to the fantasy-life of the child, the educator is as one blindfold. Lest this should create misunderstanding, it is necessary to realize that the important issue does not lie in the fantasy itself, any more than in an

inability to understand maps, or to work out an arithmetical problem, or to follow given directions—all these are but symptoms ; what is of basic importance is the human situation expressed by, and translated into, the fantasy-life—the profound and far-reaching drama which thereby gets release, on one level, yet never permanent satisfying solution. As has been well said : “ There are dramas which would be quite unintelligible except for what goes on behind the scenes. The human mind is such a drama. What is enacted on the stage in the full light of consciousness are only detached fragments and scraps of the personal mental life.”

## Chapter V

### SUBLIMATION AND EDUCATION

Sublimation its relation to and significance for Education.

"A PEDAGOGY informed by Psycho-analysis will make use of sublimation wherever possible, . . . and in individually varying ways will make instincts socially valuable. . . . The pedagogue of the future will not leave this development to chance, but on the basis of a knowledge of the instincts and the possibilities of their conversion will himself create the situations necessary for development, and thereby guide character formation into proper channels."<sup>1</sup> In these words Ferenczi has summed up the bearing upon Education of that profound and complex unconscious process termed "sublimation"—the process which,

<sup>1</sup> Ferenczi, *Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psycho-analysis*, ch. 87.

we are learning to see, lies at the base of all harmonious human evolution. An understanding of sublimation has proved one of the most difficult problems of psycho-analytic theory, and to the non-analyst the subject remains largely misapprehended or wholly obscure. Freud's definition, given in his *Introductory Lectures*, reveals the essential features of the process. He writes: "*The energy of the instinctual sexual forces is turned aside from its sexual goal and diverted towards other ends - no longer sexual, though psychically related, and socially more valuable.*"<sup>1</sup>

This definition, couched in Freud's lucid and terse style, may appear misleadingly simple, but a further study shows only too plainly what important problems are here involved. In the first place, it must be completely understood that the sublimation-process is always an *unconscious* activity, and that any process consciously carried on in order to effect some purpose can only succeed in so far as it harmonizes with the far more powerful

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, Introduction, p. 17; ch. 22, p. 290 et seq



unconscious trends. There is no simple solution, such as turning the child to a substitute interest and away from its original goal, whether this is effected by force or persuasion. For instance, the child who is given over to some unpleasing bodily habit, say, digging its finger into its nose, or biting its nails, may be diverted, seemingly at least, by getting induced to play vigorous games or to employ his hands very actively in some craft, or by the cruder device of putting its finger-tips into a cover, but it does not follow that any real change of interest has been effected. The more original *form* of the interest may be driven underground and substituted by the newer activity, but the interest itself, belonging to a primitive impulse, and linked up with emotional conflict, may be undiminished. If, however, a substitute which is closely allied to the original form can be provided, say, digging in the ground, pricking into a soft substance, or breaking up hard material, then, along with other needful changes in environment, it may be that there will be opportunity for sublimation.

Just as in regard to the other unconscious

processes, what can be done is to create as far as possible external and internal situations which will aid and develop the unconscious work of sublimation, as Ferenczi has put it. As Freud's definition shows,<sup>1</sup> the essence of sublimation is the diversion of energy from sexual goals into non-sexual ones, "psychically related and socially more valuable." The question of the psychic relationship between the new goal and the original one is of utmost importance, one of the chief factors involved in achieving, more or less, satisfactory sublimation. The phrase "psychically related" means that the energy employed in developing the new interest is *derived from* the original interest, and the new activity is only another, though less direct, means of gratifying the original desire. The latter remains, but the pleasure-effects originally belonging to it get displaced into the newer one, and this latter

<sup>1</sup> For the whole subject of Sublimation, refer to Freud's *Collected Papers* (4 vols), especially vol II, pp 47 and 82, vol III, pp 62 and 139, vol IV, p 51

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed), ch xxxiv and see Index

becomes the fresh goal of interest. Thus is provided a possibility for the pleasure connected with primitive sensations, with physical functioning, with auto-erotic activities, and with various sexual curiosities to be displaced on to more mental and more external interests so that the social and intellectual being is developed. In other words, the civilizing educating process is made possible, hence the essential relationship between sublimation and education, especially during the first half of childhood, when sublimating impulses are most powerfully dynamic.

It is essential to realize the most important characteristics of this process, since much reference is made to it both by those who claim to speak with some sympathetic knowledge of psycho-analysis and by hostile critics. The first of such characteristics has already been noted—namely, that it is an *unconscious* process: a full understanding of this point will prevent the erroneous idea that sublimation signifies the comparatively simple device of turning the child's conscious interest from one matter, say, thieving, to a conscious

interest in another, say, football or cricket. Such a transference of interest may be of extreme value and may effect most desirable things, but it is not sublimation except in so far as unconscious trends may be involved and there is relation between the displaced and succeeding interests. In the example given, the sport might fail entirely to serve as a sublimation of the thieving propensity, owing to the fact that the impulses and emotions expressed in the latter could get no outlet and no gratification from the former. A knowledge of the unconscious would suggest that the thieving impulse was a reaction to a sense of inadequacy and privation, which might be harmonized, to some extent, by inducing the child to become a *collector* of some kind (of coins, stamps, etc.), and so feel himself strong in possessions—a gratification which his sport might in no way afford. Further, it would probably be found on deeper insight that such a child is unwilling, owing to hostile feelings, to give his love, and is compensating for this negation by stealing from others. Hence, if he can be encouraged to give, and

can very freely be given to, some adaptation may be likely to come about.

This leads us to the second important characteristic of sublimation—that is, in order to achieve it, there must be *an accurate and specific transference* of energy from one given field of interest to another, each special later-developed interest corresponding with a special primary component of the *sexual instinct*. Hence, sublimation, to be successful, must link on the tendencies which are to be developed to those already existing, and by accurately diverting the primary interests, utilize them for social and educational purposes with much greater effect than at present achieved.

Before passing on to a third point of importance, it is to be noted that the implication in the last passage of a *conscious* diverting agency (through training or education) does not negate the unconscious nature of sublimation: the situation and circumstances which may help forward or hinder it can be directed at least to some degree, in the light of our deeper knowledge, but the process itself remains unconscious, much as we can deliberately

prepare and mix the soil in which we plant a seed, though the germinating process is one beyond human control. A case referred to later on in this chapter will serve to illustrate this. The child who had remained fixated too strongly and too deeply to his bodily functioning and the pleasure derived therefrom was helped to sublimate this interest by being provided with suitable material on to which he transferred a great deal of the interest. The provision of material and encouragement to use it was arranged consciously by the teacher, but the child carried out unconsciously the sublimatory process.

The third important aspect of sublimation is the fundamental difference between it and the other dynamic unconscious process of repression, a distinction which is often ignored. Repression is the agency which serves to *dam up* the instinctive impulses and the pleasure attached to their gratification, preventing their emergence into the sphere of conscious thinking, and willing ; sublimation, as we have seen, is the agency which, by transference, *uses* the instinctive impulses and their inherent pleasure

by developing them into new combinations for fresh ends. Repression is *negative*, increases the disposition of the psyche to disease, and is uneconomical, paralysing or even extinguishing valuable mental energies. Sublimation is *positive*, increasing the capacity of the personality and economical in that it makes use of possible existing trends. The greater the capacity for sublimation the greater the chance of effective personal development up to the limits of the given personality. From this it follows that the less there is of repression, and the more of sublimation acting as a developmental factor in the human being, the more chance there is of mental health and power, and the bearing of this upon educational methods and ideals is obvious. Both repression and sublimation, however, are concomitants of human development, and both are essential, in some measure, for cultural ends. Here a fourth feature in regard to sublimation reveals itself: it has to be recognized that it is always a *partial* process. It can never discharge more than a certain proportion of the energy originally bound up with the instinctive impulses, added to which is

the fact, as Freud states, that "many people possess the capacity for sublimation only in a slight degree."<sup>1</sup>

As illustration of this point, consider the pursuit of games, sport, and athleticism, fairly generally advocated for the boy and adolescent youth as a means whereby his insistent developing sexual impulses may be diverted and modified, that this does happen seems undeniable, but equally undeniable is it that it takes place to a limited degree only, and the idea that these non-sexual activities nullify the specific sexual impulses can only be maintained by those who are unwilling to see what is under their eyes. It is surely unquestioned that side by side with the greatest efficiency in, and addiction to, games and sport, we can witness the most strongly developed sexual impulses often still at a very crude level, whether in individuals, school or college communities, or in nations.

Freud's view, referred to just above, that many people possess only in slight degree the capacity of sublimation, can be substantiated

<sup>1</sup> See Freud's *Introductory Lectures*, especially chs 22, 23, 28, *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, chs 3, 5 and 6



to the full by every teacher and trainer of the young who has had the opportunity for first-hand observation.

If it were not that a standardized and uniform regime is imposed on the majority during their early years of education and training, there could be no question as to the striking differences between individuals in respect of sublimating capacity. We may take a fairly obvious illustration. On the one hand we have the child who evolves so high a degree of sublimation that he turns the larger part of his primitive sexual pleasures connected with dirt and water at immature stage to the scientific pursuit of geology, agriculture, or even one of the plastic arts, say sculpture; on the other hand, the majority of us continue to maintain that same primitive sexual interest very much on its original level—that is to say, still taking pleasure in somewhat crude jokes and incidents of the music-hall type, in smoking-room anecdotes, or in witty ‘impropriety,’ and at the same time feeling some sense of shame at our own enjoyment.

The demand for a too great and too speedy

sublimation may spell disaster, and in this light there is much in our educational and cultural systems which needs remodelling, for these are asking, in effect, either a degree of sublimation which the child cannot achieve, or, as alternative, a too great repression in the attempt to achieve it.

From this general outline of sublimation it is possible to see that a realization of the sublimation process and understanding of its workings, and power to further its development, will become far more important in the teacher's equipment in future ; indeed, it may prove to be the vital necessity for successful educational work.

If we turn from general ideas to actual educational practice, the first question that must arise is what is the rôle of the teacher, especially the teacher of young children in the first five or six years of childhood ? It would seem that there are three main functions to be discharged. One is *to prevent fixation* of feeling on the primitive instinctive pleasure level, which fixation will diminish the capacity for sublimation. If, for instance, the child's

pleasure energy is so absorbed and locked up in his original and powerful sexual curiosity, which latter cannot be consciously gratified owing to his sense of guilt and self-condemnation, the repression created results in a drying-up of interest (the later form of the original curiosity), as has already been illustrated in the previous chapter. An alternative is conflict between the repressing forces and the original curiosity, which may be so great as to absorb all the child's energy.<sup>1</sup>

A second function is *to observe*, with at least some accuracy, the processes of sublimation and repression manifesting themselves in the child, and to give necessary aid to avert failure in the direction of the former. There are three main forms of development in which we can see failure. In the first, the primitive impulses may be unduly ignored and may revenge themselves, so to speak, by erupting in crude form, quite often alongside with highly-developed mentality—such as the clever boy or girl who shows marked cruelty to other

<sup>1</sup> Freud's *Introductory Lectures*, ch. 19, pp. 242-54, ch. 22, p. 295 et seq., ch. 25, pp. 339-43.

children or to animals. In the second, we see the exact opposite: the fixation upon, and pleasure in, the primitive impulses is unduly great and is accompanied by equally great repression, which shows itself in strong reaction forms, as, for example, the painfully clean and tidy child who genuinely shows anxiety and disturbance if it stains its clothes, dirties itself, or comes into contact with dirt in any form. This exaggerated feeling for cleanliness may well be the reaction to a strongly-repressed but excessive interest in "dirt" of another kind, that is, to various bodily emanations. Yet a third form is by way of more or less definite neurosis, in other words, by a flight to some activity (hysteria, obsession, so-called "illness," and so forth) which obviates the need for sublimation, and under cover of which the more instinctive pleasures can be enjoyed. In all these forms failure in sublimation can be expressed, and it is the teacher's rôle to observe correctly, and further, to use the educational process to counter the disadvantageous trends rather than to maintain and even develop them.

With such an aim in view, the third function of the teacher is seen, namely, *to provide opportunities for successful sublimation* during the child's educational years. Here, perhaps, lies the main work of the teacher of the future, a work which calls for patient and detailed effort, on which already psycho-analysis has cast some light, but which remains almost untouched, so far, by educators themselves. The discovery of what is happening within the individual, and how far such happening can be made useful for individual and cultural ends, must become the teacher's first charge, rather than the formulation of a body of rules and ideals to which the pupils must be fitted. The framework of existing society must be recognized, but at the same time the teacher must be the experimenter with a view to reshaping for better ends. "In every branch of education there is need of a looser rein, but of a more strictly exact and clear-sighted guidance." The capacity for clear sight is not, unfortunately, inherent in most of us, and the teacher can only gain it, in the first place, by freeing himself from his own unconscious

fixations on primitive pleasures, thus becoming capable of as much sublimation as his personality permits, so that his unconscious will speak in the desired way to the unconscious of his pupils, in the second place, by being able consciously to make use of his impulses and thoughts, without inhibition, in the direction he chooses. We need no argument to realize how greatly the teacher, just like all other human beings, is handicapped by his own fears and conflicts, which lead him to many misinterpretations of the world within himself and of the external world, preventing effective aid in the pupil's sublimation.

Of the three ways in which the teacher (if sufficiently free) can assist, it will be noted that the first and second mentioned may be considered mainly *negative* in character whereas the third is definitely *positive*. By observing and helping to prevent, diminish, or remove fixation, the way towards possible sublimation is paved, and these negative measures are essential for any subsequent development, but the third measure is positive and progressive in character. One or

two instances of the more negative measures may be useful.

A very clever child of six showed himself excessively interested in very "dirty" and sticky substances, such as mud, wet clay, thick wet paint, plasticene, and so forth. At home he had been in charge of a nurse who made strenuous efforts to wean him from his really excessive preoccupation, giving him bright-coloured counters and bricks, with the result that instead of accepting these substitutes, the child became very tiresome, often slightly upset internally, and much depressed. He was then sent to school (a kindergarten based on Froebel principles), and it happened that he had a number of tasks set him involving the use of sticky wet material—wet sand, clay, and plasticene, in handling which he was very successful and generally won first place in his class and his teacher's high praise. In a few months a change was apparent: the constant diarrhœa and stomach trouble disappeared, the child became far more amiable and tranquil, and began turning to fresh objects of interest. From an investigation it became clear that

the boy's over-interest in the sticky, dirty materials which he chose was itself a sublimation of his more primitive and excessive interest in excrement, and for him a very big step in sublimation. The nurse's endeavour to oust this interest gave him a sense of his own guilt, and drove him, on the one hand, into a more primitive pleasure still, that of bodily gratification expressed in his internal digestive troubles, and on the other, into antagonism which was his way of expressing his own guilt. When he was once more allowed to continue his own form of sublimation, at his own rate, under the teacher's encouragement, he lost his guilt-sense—a gain of the highest importance—was able to enjoy his pleasure in his home relations, and by degrees—though unusually slowly for a child so mentally advanced—turned to substitute interests.

This case shows clearly those characteristics of sublimation which have already been referred to. Here we have a quite unconscious process at work in the child : we see the displacement of the pleasure bound up originally with an instinctual impulse on to a psychically-related



object (the various sticky materials) ; in contradistinction to repression, there was a positive and progressive development, involving a large number of the child's emotional trends, in proof of which is the fact that when he is deprived of this possibility of sublimation his emotional life is upset and turns to antagonistic impulses: the partial nature of the sublimation process is evident in that it does not carry the child right away from his original primitive interest, but, on the contrary, keeps him very close to the latter, and it is significant that he rejects the bright counters and the brown copper coins offered him as substitutes, unconsciously realizing the too-remote relationship between them and the original interest. Yet, as has been said, this child had already effected, at his own level of unconscious interest, a great step in sublimation, and the teacher, in removing hindrances at this stage, that is to say, by allowing and encouraging his interest in the sticky material, was preventing further harmful repression. Only by an understanding of the deeper situation could the appropriate treatment be offered the child ;

observation merely of manifest symptoms could not give a clue to the riddle.

This is clearly shown if we turn to a second case, of a child of the same age, a boy of six and a half, also intelligent beyond the average, who spent long periods playing with his wet clay and plasticene, making nothing of definite form but mainly dabbing his fingers into the shapeless mass. Other symptoms, such as exceptional clumsiness with knife and fork and scissors, fear of the dark in bed, gave rise to the suspicion that his interest in sticky materials was not a step in sublimation but rather a regression to a more childish period revealing a large fund of emotional activity still bound up with his functioning, an interest which had never had its fair share of fulfilment at the appropriate much earlier stage, since he had been brought up by an old-fashioned nurse with drastic ideas as to training in cleanly habits. The teacher in whose care he was, out of benevolent consideration lest the child should be too early thwarted in his supposed genuine interests, encouraged his proclivity for the sand and clay, with the result that he

became still more infantile in behaviour. By analytic knowledge a more appropriate treatment was discovered; by gradual degrees harder materials were introduced, so that the boy was forced, in order to gain any interest and excitement from it, to devise means to use it—to cut and shape it with his fingers, and even to join with other children for new devices in fashioning it. Thus he began to turn from his babyish fixation—the pleasure in merely kneading the soft material—to a sublimated form of it, involving effort, some mechanical skill, and comradeship.

These two cases to the non-expert might well look strikingly alike; to those able to penetrate below the surface they presented diametrically opposed psychic situations. The two given cases can serve to show how necessary is an accurate understanding of the inner situation if we are effectively to aid sublimation, whereas random shots can avail nothing, indeed they may intensify the original failure. We know, for example, that in a rough-and-ready way changes can be effected by diverting interest, such as in the way of developing

powerful sport activity, or corporate organized action (expressed in social clubs, in boy and girl scout movements, in military organization, and so forth), at certain critical stages of the human being's life. But this is not enough : we have to be more certain whither we are tending. In spite of overt appearance, much of the seeming change may prove to be either side-tracking, which leads back ultimately to the original situation, its strength intensified by the interruption, or an exhausting outpouring of energy in directions quite other than that of the original aim, and so leaving the latter untouched and dynamic. Neither of such processes is to be ranked as sublimation, though often assumed to be so.

There will be no dispute over the objective excellence of such things as sport, development of physical health and capacity, or keen interest centred on progress in work, skill in examinations, or high ambitions, yet it may be that in respect to emotional development we shall have to evaluate such activities somewhat differently. In the latter light, it is highly possible that we may be forced to a

"transvaluation of values." The absorbing games and athletics in the girls' public schools, and perhaps the hardly less absorbing intellectual work, at the adolescent stage at all events, may reveal themselves, judged from a deeper standard of values, as a diversion—and a most effective one—of the larger part of sexual energy, so that the girl becomes in her manifest development a very "satisfactory" product of the schools, healthy, independent, "no nonsense about her," as some headmistresses will say in admiring tones. But what if, alongside with this orientation, goes a checking and distorting of the girl's deeper sexual and emotional development which expresses itself later in all kinds of difficulties and maladjustments, either directly in sexual relations, or, in more disguised manner, in work, in social situations, or in physical ills? It may be that the infantile desire for masculine potency and functioning (always in the unconscious of the girl-child), a desire incapable of fulfilment, is immensely revived and strengthened by the masculine bias and masculine activities in this critical pubertal stage in place

of the development of feminine sublimations through true sublimatory application of energy.

Such application might be, to put it in a general way, by developing and turning to use the more cherishing and less active sides of the girl's personality, the cultivation of the arts, the *creative* rather than the *acquisitive* aspects of knowledge and power. It may be very true that in modern civilizations, as we know them, large numbers of women need the acquisitive masculine power to fit themselves to prevailing conditions ; it may be also true that women *can* achieve such capacity with no seeming loss, for the human being is a creature of astounding adaptability and appears to change its manifestations with ease and satisfaction, but the sacrifice involved, possibly a large one, must be reckoned with. (The Esquimaux can exist on blubber and in a temperature below zero, but their average stature falls far short of that of the inhabitants of warmer climates.) At all events, it is the business of the educator-psychologist to find out and understand as

far as may be what is going on and the gains and losses involved.

Just as the "side-tracking" process affects emotional development, so it is with the more specific intellectual issues. Much of education on the mental side gives merely false substitutes for sublimation. The children who leave their schools at fourteen and never again show inclination to read (save the most superficial stuff), to think, or to do creative work, are living proofs that a true sublimation has not taken place during the educational period ; their real interests of a fundamental kind have not been used and turned to account, but rather, having suffered repression, reawake in undeveloped primitive form when opportunity arises. This need not imply that the work carried out in the school is, in itself, lacking in regard to interest and excellent presentation : the poet's cry,

If she be not fair to me,  
What care I how fair she be !

is the cry of all instinctual life, and its limited personal note can only be changed into a

richer, fuller one through inner development, not by mere additional charm and variety in the external objects. To the child who is in the grip of repressions which hinder his "appreciating" capacity, the most beautiful or interesting external things, though they may claim his manifest attention and serve to preoccupy him, can yield him nothing of fundamental value, for he can get no real contact with them. It follows that we are expending effort very uneconomically by beginning at the wrong end when we add perpetually to the multiplicity and variety of the educational "material": that is, constant fresh methods and fresh devices, more books, more pictures, more entertainment, cinemas, wireless, plays, and so on, leaving untouched that first and essential consideration—a knowledge of the human personality.

If we turn to consider the more positive side of sublimation, we have to ask, in addition to "How can repressions be removed or diminished?" the further question, "Can the educational process *provide suitable opportunities* for aiding sublimation?" The answer is Yes,



provided that the educator is able to take an attitude somewhat different from the one most prevalent to-day. As already noted, he must become the patient observer and investigator of the mind rather than the purveyor of varied and attractive goods. Through analysis of his own mind he may obtain, in a much greater degree, freedom from repression of the more harmful kind and capacity for greater sublimation ; then, with this new psycho-analytic estimate of values, he can set to work to observe and reevaluate the aims and methods in current education. Thus he can bring to bear upon his work two important sublimating agencies : one, his own freed personality with its influence upon the child's conscious and unconscious mind ; another, his intellectual work, that is his power of observation, and interpretation, with the advantages these can offer to the child.

Already some reference has been made, in Chapter I, to the results to be derived from a body of analysed teachers—the readjusted relations in so many directions, the freeing from harmful inhibitions, and not least, the

genuine interest in mind and its process which will develop. It may be worth while in this connexion to touch upon two matters which are vital to the child, and to note the attitude towards them usually found among teachers. The first is the young child's interest in his own body and in those of other people, and his still greater interest in the bodily functions ; the second is the more *direct* interest of the older child (between the ages of eight and fourteen, say) in sexual matters and in sexual functions. That this powerful interest exists, no one disputes, and yet it is true to say that the educational process is carried through practically without any direct reference to, or recognition of, it. The interest in the body and its functioning (possibly more strongly repressed than any other instinctual pleasure) is powerfully dynamic, bound up with most of the fundamental urges, and highly influential in developing character-traits of importance. What is its fate, generally speaking ? To be relegated, by school-age, to the sternest taboo, with the result that the primitive interest may remain often intensified by this strong repres-

sive process, expressing itself at a later date in ways undesirable both to the individual and to society. Prudish and often disastrous inhibitions on the one hand, absence of self-restraint on the other, disorder, or exaggerated and punctilious standards of order; self-indulgence sometimes masked as generosity, opposed to grudging meanness; an unbridgable gulf between the so-called "gross" and the so-called "spiritual," all these character-traits may be evolved as the outcome of too great or too little repression, or distortion of instinctive pleasure-interest in the body and its functions, clearly an unprogressive and in-harmonious state of affairs.

But it will not be possible for the teacher who is himself in the grip of such a psychic condition to help to free the child from it. When he is freed, he can begin to find ways and means of achieving for others his own state of freedom. Doubtless a complex task, calling for the best thought and effort, but even now we might make a small beginning.

One such suggests itself by the method of a *closer linking up* in the educational process

of the child's primitive interests with the new cultural ones provided by education. The child of seven or eight, for instance, learns about manure, what it is, its use for the development of the soil, for making china and for several other industries, for plant-growth, and so forth, but rarely, if ever, does the teacher take this striking opportunity to make plain and direct the connexion between this "dirt," achieving such desirable ends if appropriately put to use, with the material excreted from the child's own body, also serving vital and valuable ends. The establishment of such a link would do much to aid the development of the primitive interest into a wider, more impersonal emotion ; it would transfer some of the pleasure and excitement bound up with the personal act (always fraught with some kind of sexual significance in the unconscious), to a non-sexual goal ; it would remove, in part, the guilt-sense so often attached (largely owing to the strong taboos laid down by society) to the bodily functioning, and so set free the locked-up energy for other more useful ends. In other words, sublimation would

be furthered. It is common knowledge that for most civilized adults sticky substances, wet soil, manure, muddy water, sediments, all these designated as just "dirt," are objects of mingled attraction and repulsion, the latter being the most dominant in consciousness: thus far, and no farther, unless we have the scientific outlook, can we go. From a like disadvantageous mental position we might help to free the child by establishing all the possible links between these materials and his own personal material, with their respective functioning and use.

This is one suggestion—a mere outline of what might be devised in the same direction, from the thought and observation of freed minds. Another, bearing on the same theme, is the adoption, or extended use in the school, of experimentation with a very wide choice of material put entirely at the disposal of the child. We have already gone quite a long way on this educational road, as is well known, but more progress is possible. The material is often present, but the child's spontaneous activity in regard to it is too much cramped

and confined by the limitations of the timetable, or by the teacher's theories or by the demands of "authorities" for attainment to some standard of work by a given age. If we could have more observation, based upon a knowledge of the unconscious, of the child's usage of the widest possible choice of materials—somewhat in the nature of the experiment carried out in America under the auspices of Clark University—we might begin to learn something about the *stages* in the development of the child's interest, and give appropriate guidance for each stage. As has been shown from a case cited in this chapter, to offer the child counters or marbles at the stage when he is still demanding sand or clay, which alone can bridge the gulf between the more and the less primitive interests, is wasted labour. Moreover, the spontaneous usage of various materials can reveal much of the emotional life active in the child and so can throw light on the otherwise obscure features of his behaviour.

If we turn to a later stage of education, we are met by the problem of what is called

“sex-education” in relation to the adolescent.<sup>1</sup> It is probably impossible, even if it were desirable, to give instruction in the school concerning sex-matters, beyond a knowledge of the physiological and biological facts which can best be conveyed by sensible text-books, and so much instruction should be a part of every school curriculum for the adolescent: in addition there should be a readiness on the part of the teacher to answer all individual questions which arise.

Nevertheless, this is the stage which can afford opportunities for freer and more open treatment of sex-matters, provided that the more oppressive inhibitions of the adolescent have been escaped. It is at this stage of his education, as a rule, that love-poetry, drama, and art are first introduced, appropriately so in some respects, since adolescence is a phase of active and powerful sublimation, as every teacher well knows. It is, however, a question worth consideration as to whether sublimation

<sup>1</sup> Adolescence

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed), ch xxxvii,  
“Some Problems of Adolescence”

might not be more effectively aided by the introduction of this type of material at an earlier stage, perhaps about the age of ten, when the inner conflict is to some degree latent and the sexual impulses less specific. Only experiment can give the answer, and meanwhile the opportunities afforded by this later stage can be turned to account. More usually the love-passages and the direct sexual allusions in the great poets and dramatists are made use of by the teacher as a flight from unconscious and conscious impulses in the pupils and in himself. It may be that the manifest reaction of the pupils to such passages, whether they are lofty and highly sublimated, or very direct and "gross," is in the form of embarrassment, or giggles, or jokes, and the teacher's reaction forces him into an ostrich-like policy of "not noticing" or of coercing his class into an outward show of gravity. But if he could, in the first place, show his own deep interest and pleasure in the subject, he would to some extent free the pupils and enable them to feel *their* interest in place of the embarrassment, which is a form of repressed interest.



Secondly, if the passage in question is at all appropriate for reading aloud, it can be read and rendered as beautifully as may be ; if "unsuitable," that is, touching too closely on the most intimate human feelings and sensations, or expressed in unveiled language and even in words which are "obscene," judged by current conventions, then the class might be asked to read it to themselves with an explanation for this, namely, the deep appeal it makes to all of them (including the teacher), its undisguised mode of expression, and its close relation to our very earliest and most pleasurable wishes and ideas. Needless to say, it is not suggested that the teacher shall deliver a homily or quote ethical maxims : rather that he shall be sufficiently free to allow his pupils to realize his own emotional attitude towards the material handled. Once more, this attitude on the teacher's part may do much to liberate the pupils from their guilt-sense and so remove an obstacle to sublimation in so far as any conscious factors can operate. In the same way, in reference to every subject he is dealing with, the teacher can endeavour to forge the

links between it and the pupil's instinctive life, through the medium of Literature, Myth, Fable, and Art, and always, primarily, by means of his own freedom to handle the real significance of the theme. For it is this real significance that the child is always seeking, yet often fearing to know, and to be able to know, to get pleasure in knowing,<sup>1</sup> with the sanction of the teacher (the authoritative parent-figure), will do much to relieve the sense of guilt connected with sexual-love themes.

And this brings us to another great opportunity the teacher has before him in dealing with the adolescent stage: it is a time of active mental enquiry, just as was the period of early childhood, but very commonly curiosity is linked on to a strong sense of guilt which acts as an inhibiting force. If the curiosity can cease to be a prohibited pleasure,

<sup>1</sup> Curiosity.

Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), ch. 25, p. 484 et seq., and see Index.

Abraham, *Selected Papers on Psycho-analysis* (International Psycho-analytical Library, No. 13)

if the teacher will *lead the way* in curiosity by his speculations in thought and enquiry, then the too-great repression of the child's curiosity can be lifted or modified, and in this realm sublimation will be more free to work. Incidentally, it is obvious how much more interesting the teacher's function becomes for himself if he can use his own curiosity to lead both himself and his pupils into fresh realms of thought, and how much greater would be the value of his presentations. The tendency to repeat former experience again and again concerning which Freud has written:<sup>1</sup> "We may venture to make the assumption that there really exists in psychic life a repetition-compulsion, which goes beyond the pleasure-principle . . . a repetition-compulsion more primitive, more elementary, more instinctive than the pleasure-principle which is displaced by it. . . . Children repeat in their play everything that has made a great impression on them in actual life, that they thereby abreact the

<sup>1</sup> Repetition.

Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure-Principle*, chs ii, iii, v, especially (International Psycho-analytical Library, No. 4).

strength of the impression and so to speak make themselves masters of the situation," has far-reaching results in intellectual spheres, in respect to both inhibition of new developments and to the particular direction in which new development can take place. The subject is complex, but it may be possible to realize the close connexion between this compulsion towards repetition of experience and the teacher's attitude towards free enquiry and new mental experiences.

In the sphere of behaviour as well as of mental functioning the teacher can make opportunities for sublimation, especially at the adolescent stage. A marked feature of school-life, above all in regard to boys, is the damping down, very often the complete negation, of close relationships between the pupils, boy and boy, girl and girl, or between the pupils and teachers, and it is not unusual to hear head masters and head mistresses boasting that no such attachments are ever to be found in their schools. This is an illustration of the need for understanding human development. The feeling directed to the school-fellow or to the teacher of the same

sex is in part a sublimated form of the earlier more primitive love given to the father and mother respectively, in part an expression of self-love, objectivized. It is a stage necessary for further extension into a more sublimated phase which renders possible genuine love-feeling for an object apart from oneself. The taboo of such a love-relationship by the parent-substitute (the teacher) reinforces guilt and repression, and correspondingly less sublimation is possible; so we may find the cruder and more difficult kinds of relations between the parties concerned, and the teacher unable to deal with them appropriately. The very attachment to the teacher can become a powerful sublimating force, if on the teacher's side there is understanding of the situation.

Turning to another sphere of the educational field, we find that the teacher of the young child has many opportunities ready for use: one such is the fact of the child's youth and comparative powerlessness. For the child is more or less dogged by a sense of inferiority for which it seeks to compensate, either by developing an excessive estimate of itself

accompanied by a sense of guilt, or by taking refuge in fantasy. The teacher could dwell more on the advantages of childhood, in that its potentialities are so many and so wide, at every step the world offers fresh delights and fresh conquests and thereby could discourage the sense of inferiority and consequently diminish the need for repression and fantasy. The child's inferiority-feeling, showing itself in fantasies of power and success, and frequently in boastful and pushing behaviour, is often treated by the teacher as if it were the very opposite, that is, a *superiority*-claim; in consequence, the child is snubbed and ignored, this being the best treatment, it is considered, and is thereby thrust still further into his inferiority-attitude, for which he once more must compensate by more intense fantasying, or by powerful repression which allows him to ignore the whole situation—that is, all emotion relating to its repression.

In respect to this last-named factor of the child's life, the teacher has certainly a part to play. For the child, his fantasies are an escape from difficult reality, a compensation for real

disappointments, an explanation of the unknown and unknowable, a defence against fears, and a reshaping of his world and his own fate on a more pleasurable basis, hence they are bound up with his deepest repressions, which, under cover of this fantasy-life, maintain sway over him and impede sublimation.<sup>1</sup>

If the teacher can give aid towards some reality-achievement as substitute for fantasy, he will be doing much to free the child. Help can be given by way of true explanations whenever asked for, by inspiring the child with more belief in himself, and by using the material of education to get contact with the unconscious trends. The artist, as Freud has pointed out, is fortunate in being able to transmute a large part of his fantasy-life into his art-achievements, and thereby he actually obtains a measure of the love, honour, and power which his fantasy-life enacted; the ordinary man must get by achievement in other

<sup>1</sup> *Fantasy*. See Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, pp. 80, 310-15; *Collected Papers*, vols. 1-IV, especially vol. IV.

Ferenczi, *Contributions to Psycho-analysis*.

Low, *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, Lecture V.

directions that same compensation—he must be an “artist” in creating some kind of sublimation out of his primitive fantasy-material : only by this path can he gain any measure of personal fulfilment. In the schoolroom the teacher must aid the child who dreams of himself as king surrounded by an admiring court, with a fairy-tale princess by his side, not merely to abandon his fantasy owing to an idea of its being “wrong” or “lazy,” but rather to achieve that very fantasy as fully as may be on a reality-plane—that is, by making himself top of his class, or at all events, by gaining a respectable place in it, by pleasing people so that his school-fellows do like and respect him, by giving out love so that he may eventually win his fairy-tale partner ; and if all such endeavours still fall short of his desires—as they must—by further helping him to realize his incalculable potentialities for development in *some* direction.

Above all, he must realize that his achievement is successful in so far as it reaches the height of *his own* capacities, not of another's : the constant reiteration, in the home and school,



of, "Try to do it as X does"; or, "You have not done so well as Y, who is only your own age", or, "Some day you will be more like J?" is false in its basis and bound to act as a paralysing influence, perhaps further strengthening in the child his sense of guilt that he is not, and cannot be, a pattern of the idealized parent-figure. There is no fear that the child will fail to make ideals for himself, often indeed far too lofty and binding for the development of a harmonious future; we have to give him as well for a pattern his own potentialities, his own powerful impulses towards self-expansion, and it is because such a conception is to a large extent realized in them that some of the more recent educational methods and ideals offer such hope and promise, and on that account some consideration of them from a psycho-analytic standpoint may be of value. In the next chapter, therefore, I wish to point out some outstanding features of the most recent developments in Education.

## *Chapter VI*

### SOME MODERN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS FROM THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC STANDPOINT

Co-Education—The Montessori Method—Self-Government—Metal Tests.

IF we apply the psycho-analytical touchstone to present-day educational ideals and systems, we shall find that some of these answer to the test far more readily than others; namely, those which are based upon the fuller recognition of the child's own powerful instinctive life and seek to develop it as fully as is compatible with his own true fulfilment—which, of course, must include a recognition of the community's demands. Hence, any method which attempts to discover and study that instinct-life is bound to be of use, and it is on this account that Madame Montessori's method has thrown great illumination on the teacher's path, along with such experiments

as nursery-schools, "free" kindergartens, and others of similar nature. All such experiments are a substitution for a form of education which involves the idea (implicitly if not explicitly) that the human being is, to a large extent, a ready-made mechanism only needing certain stimuli to enable it to travel along a given route with smooth progress. Such a view involves adaptation, often at very great cost, to a highly complex social system, in the process of which the individual may be lost to sight.

Further, in many of these newer experiments we see an attempt to appreciate psychological facts, so that the charge, often too well deserved by educators in the past, "A psychological attitude of mind is still foreign to you, and you are accustomed to regard it with suspicion and to deny it a scientific status,"<sup>1</sup> is, happily, beginning to lose its truth. More and more we see two principles evolving in present-day education and gaining slow acceptance: one, that education must concern itself from first to last with the individual

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, Introduction, pp. 11-18.

mind rather than with preconceived ideals and standards imposed from without ; the other, that the only way to arrive at any knowledge of that individual mind is by seeing it in action and studying its manifestations. But we still accept and subscribe to many ideals and standards, because they answer to some demand in ourselves, a demand which we gratify by passing them on to the next generation. Two or three of these are very prominent at the moment in the educational world, and may, therefore, fitly claim attention.

The first is *co-education*,<sup>1</sup> so warmly advocated to-day by large numbers of educators, especially by those who hold advanced views in various directions. Many of them go so far as to say that the co-educational system can solve, and has solved, sex-problems in school or college, and insist upon its value throughout the educational period ; others are in favour of a more limited application, say up to the

<sup>1</sup> See also *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, ch. 3, "The Family," J C Flugel, ch. 5, "Education," Barbara Low .

college-period. The arguments in its favour are many, and are probably familiar to most of us.<sup>1</sup> The main ones are as follows: the capacity of the female for male achievements in mental, and to a large extent, in physical, spheres; the complementary nature of the sexes; the advantages to be derived from the conjunction of masculine and feminine standards and methods, the value of early intimacy between the sexes on the one hand to obviate too great differentiation, often leading to hostility, in maturity, and on the other, to enable one sex to supplement its deficiencies from the advantages possessed by the other. Allowing that many of such arguments are valid, the important fact remains that they ignore the most dynamic factors in the case—the unconscious ones—and so present an imperfect picture. Through deeper investigation of mind we have come to realize that the individual's unconscious attitude towards his sex-life and all the phenomena

<sup>1</sup> Co-education is dealt with most comprehensively, from the standpoint of consciousness, in "Foundations of Education" (vol. II, ch. 6) by Professor Findlay.

relating to sex (which attitude is very largely based upon childish fantasy) is probably the most influential factor in his character-development and mental-life as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

So complex a subject can hardly be dealt with here beyond making a mere reference, but if co-education is to be discussed to any purpose we cannot continue to ignore the matters most relevant to it. The first of these is the power, in male and female alike, of that fear which is often termed the "castration-complex," with all the reactions engendered by it. In the girl this sense of deprivation—of bodily equipment and power unlike, and inferior to, the boy's—may develop into hostility against the man, or against what she regards as a man-made world, or into an excessive self-depreciation, or into an ambitious desire to rival the man on his own ground. Some of these developments, it is obvious, must be disadvantageous to the woman's harmonious fulfilment, others may lead to an effective and satisfying sublimation. On the whole,

<sup>1</sup> Freud, *Introductory Lectures*, chs 13 and 23, *Collected Papers*, various essays in vols ii and iii

for the great majority of womankind the "deprivation" sense is resolved, at least tolerably, through the specially feminine functions, directly by child-bearing, more indirectly by child-tending, by home-making, or some kindred activity. In this way she becomes "equal" to the man and is vindicated. Now, it is highly possible that parallelism and competition with the male may be a means of reinforcing the unconscious fantasies concerning her "loss" and consequent inferiority, and with the fantasies, her hostile emotions, thus making the desired *feminine* sublimation—the only genuine one, for her—still more unattainable.

In the man's case the "castration-complex," which in him is largely the outcome of his fears connected with guilty unconscious desires, is resolved, to some degree at least, by his own creative work, his specific masculine art; but if the opportunity for his distinctive creative act, in the sublimated form of work or some other achievement, such as sport, is taken from him and he must either share it with the woman or even see her outstrip him

in this sphere, his adjustment may be a matter of much greater difficulty, and perhaps become an impossibility. This scanty reference to what is, as has been noted already, one of the most profound issues for the human being will serve to indicate how deeply educational systems touch the personality, quite apart from their recognizable pedagogic effects.

To pass to another consideration, it seems probable that a co-educational scheme will tend to strengthen rather than lessen the need for repression, and certainly to demand a degree of sublimation which cannot be obtained. The usual theory of the co-educationalist is that the sexual element makes itself conspicuous by its absence and is replaced by a frank and merely friendly "camaraderie" among the elder pupils. Two criticisms at once arise: in the first place, our deeper knowledge of sexual development shows that this can rarely be true; in the second place, if it were true, it would reveal a very disadvantageous situation. As we have seen, the sexual impulses can be diverted, repressed, or sublimated, but never extinguished, if,



therefore, we accept as true the *manifest* appearance of the pupils' relationship, we are forced to believe that one of these three processes has taken place. As diversion is effecting nothing radical, but merely side-tracking temporarily the existing impulses, we may regard it as negative, either repression or sublimation must account for the supposed absence of sexual wishes, which so generally are approaching their zenith with later adolescence. But a complete and real sublimation is hardly to be believed possible at this stage, for the very fact of so wholesale a transference from the sexual to the non-sexual (if it really did happen) would, at this stage of life, seem to spell a large degree of repression. There is, doubtless, an *attempt* at a high degree of sublimation—an attempt encouraged by the school's ideal of non-sexual camaraderie (an ideal essential to co-education, since emotional relations springing from sex-attraction would make for the school insuperable difficulty); but the attempt, in the majority of cases, must fail as far as the unconscious wishes are concerned, and be translated into indifference,

or neutrality, or seeming brother-and-sister attitude.

In the early stages of adolescence, it has now been established, the child tends to turn away from the opposite sex and towards his or her own sex. This is a matter very well known to most teachers : little boys between nine and eleven years of age more frequently than not shun girls of the same age and seek out other boys of their own age, or a good deal older, and may develop passionate friendships with these ; the girls behave in like manner. At this stage, therefore, the co-educational system is not fitted to the child's development, and either he ignores the opposite sex, although nominally he is being " co-educated," or, and this is the undesirable situation, he is dominated by his own ideal of submission to authority and seemingly accepts his fate. It seems likely that co-education up to the age of eight or nine is a quite desirable thing ; after that, we have not certainty, and only further investigation of a deeper kind can entitle us to definite pronouncements for or against. It may be said, however, and with conviction, that one

feature of real value in the co-educational school, though in no way special to it, is the mixed staff: for it seems clear that thereby the pupils are provided with an outlet for their emotions towards the opposite sex, an outlet of desirable nature, provided the teachers can deal with it satisfactorily, leading on to a later more developed emotion.

There are other matters of importance for consideration in relation to co-education; here only two or three aspects have been selected, but they are of fundamental significance. At least we may hesitate, in the light of such knowledge, to give a too wholesale support; on the other hand, still more understanding may show that, if it is a system carrying disadvantages, it has sufficient counterbalancing advantage: for this we need our "field-workers" in many directions. One of the developments of recent times which has had more influence, perhaps, than any other contemporary educational movement is the Montessori method, whose psychological implications afford interesting study. Here again there is opportunity to consider one or two

features only, and I have chosen those which seem specially important from the psycho-analytical point of view.

I have already referred to the valuable basis of the Montessori method, that of observation of the living creature in spontaneous action, unencumbered by stereotyped traditions. That is the principle of the system, or rather, as Madame Montessori has so often pointed out, of what is, *not* a system, but rather an attempt on the part of children and teacher-observer together to experience and develop. It would seem that here we have the scientific investigator truly at work. But in practice it is doubtful whether the teacher's rôle is not a far more positive and powerful influence than Madame Montessori and her followers conceive. In regard to the first point—the spontaneous activity of the child—the whole conception of the apparatus and its exact and systematic handling comes into question. That the child gains certain power, mental adjustment, and plasticity through these carefully-planned exercises can hardly be disputed, but how far is he gaining

opportunity for the expression of his fantasy, and as result, any development and adjustment of his inner life? Not only the actual exercises of various kinds, employing the various sense-avenues, but the whole environment would appear to limit in a very pronounced way the child's emotional life. We are perpetually told, both in Madame Montessori's own writings and in those of her adherents, that the children of the Montessori school are conspicuous for their moral development, their harmony, and their social sense. What, we are bound to ask, has become of all those powerful impulses, discoverable in every human being, of hate co-existent and bound up with love, of jealousy, of self-aggrandizement, and of guilt leading to a too-strict ideal? Does the Montessori method take cognizance of the unconscious, or rather obscure it by creating an ideal for the children to follow? This is one of the questions which is bound to arise in examining the method. For it is often apparent that under a disguise, a disguise most acceptable to the child's conscious attitude, in subtle form, the teacher, or the method,

creates a powerful influence and even establishes what may be called a system of rewards and punishments, though repudiating the punishing idea in decided terms.

One instance may be given. The child who consistently refuses to adapt himself to any occupation of his own choosing, and creates an interference with the work of others, is put in a place by himself, isolated some little distance from the rest, but supplied with materials for use if he chooses to employ himself: this, we are told, is not "punishment." If we understand the working of the unconscious, apart from the effect upon the child's conscious mind, we realize that this isolation, whether in the same room or in a separate room, can symbolize one of the most dreaded terrors, a castration-punishment, far more intense as regards the effect it produces than a scolding or possibly a beating. Does the Montessori method reckon with this unconscious interpretation?

Here is another illustration. A great feature in the Montessori School is the "silent period," in which the teacher and pupils shut their

eyes and either sit for a given space quite silent or move round the room on tiptoe, almost noiseless. The children, we learn, appreciate this device and vie with one another in their silent, gentle movements. Again, what may be the reaction in the unconscious? We are well accustomed to the fact that silence, in the child's fantasy, especially accompanied with deprivation of light,<sup>1</sup> may be symbolic of death or danger, and consequently closed eyes and silence may be linked on to dread and a sense of guilt in the mind of the child, reminding us of the familiar theme in folk-lore and fairy-tale of spell-binding, which always serves as a punishment given or received. I am not here attempting to pass judgment on Madame Montessori's methods—the isolation of the naughty child, the silence-periods, the rigid application of apparatus—but am concerned with the question of how far she takes into consideration the effects which these

<sup>1</sup> Deprivation of Light .

Abraham, *Selected Papers on Psycho-analysis* (International Psycho-analytical Library, No 13), ch ix, pp. 201-206

may produce upon the unconscious of the child, as well as upon consciousness.

Another feature in her theory which presents a problem is her view about the fictitious story for the child: she rules<sup>1</sup> out the fairy-tale on the ground that it is harmful in that it leads the child further from the truth, bewildering it with attractive illusions. Again, it is necessary to turn to the unconscious for further illumination on this point. And from this source of evidence we find that the fairy-tale is in part the vehicle of expression for the child's own fantasy, in part a gratification for those wishes which would otherwise remain inhibited. As such, it is of great significance to his development; through it he voices his sense of guilt and resulting fears, and so obtains relief to some degree, though at the same time he may respond with dread to see his own wishes visibly expressed. The tale

<sup>1</sup> *Re* fairy tale, see (1) Symbolism *Papers on Psycho-analysis* (3rd ed.), Ernest Jones, (2) "The Development of a Child," *International Journal of P.A.*, vol 14, 4, Melanie Klein, (3) *Psycho-analysis, Social Aspects*, ch 5, Barbara Low.



may give sanction to his fantasies, for, like the latter, it expresses the tabooed thoughts in symbolic form, but with more freedom and beauty than he can allow to himself, and thus it performs for him what all creative art does, to some degree, for the individual—it gives him back his own fantasies in sublimated form, at one and the same time gratifying them (that is, allowing him to enjoy them freed from the guilt-sense) and aiding him to develop them from the more primitive to the more sublimated. Madame Montessori's attitude would seem to suggest that she ignores the existence and function of the child's fantasy-life.

Here are only two or three considerations from a host of others which might prove of much importance in relation to the unconscious, and since the Montessori method has proved its value in various directions, it would be worth while if the psychological foundations of it could be further investigated by both supporters and critics.

Linked up with the Montessori method is the system adopted in many schools of to-day known as "Self-government." The idea is

not new, quite old indeed in certain of its forms, but far more widespread than formerly. A wide measure of this so-called self-government, which really signifies corporate action by the pupils in controlling certain of the school's affairs, has been long in practice in our older public schools for boys, especially under the form of the prefect system, by which the boys at the top of the school have control largely in their own hands. But the application to various types of schools, to girls as well as boys, and to all ages, is a modern development based on an American pattern, such as that of the George Junior Republic and other similar experiments.

<sup>1</sup> In so far as such a system helps to fulfil the child's demand to equal, if not rival, his father and thus prove to himself his own power, it has validity for the unconscious; it is the throwing over of reliance upon the parent's authority and the creation of the child's own standards. It is also a legitimate, and often necessary, outlet for the expression of both love and hate towards his rivals and love-

<sup>1</sup> See *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, chs 3, 4, 5.

objects (for in his unconscious his fellow-pupils are both). But there is the opposite aspect to consider. The child demands authority as well as resisting it; he needs an authoritative pattern to follow as well as a rival to outstrip; however independent he may feel, he also desires to be the child as well, protected and guided. Some compromise is called for, and probably can be satisfactorily effected so long as the teachers are willing to maintain their authority. I mean by this, so long as they are not dominated by the unconscious wish to abandon their own adult position and take the place of the pupils. The attitude of the teacher's unconscious is an interesting feature in the growing development of self-government, for it appears that one strong motive in this demand is the teacher's unconscious wish to throw over authority and identify himself with the child.<sup>1</sup> In this way he can become again, in his fantasy at all events, a child and rid himself of responsibility—which so often the adult wishes to avoid, in part owing to a sense of fear, in part owing

<sup>1</sup> See *Social Aspects of Psycho-analysis*, chs 4 and 5.

to a desire to get love for himself without giving out anything. Self-government by the pupils must fail under such circumstances; it becomes a masquerade, known as such to everyone unconsciously.

It is sometimes possible to see the unconscious motive manifesting itself in the pupils who especially demand "self-government," but in reality are seeking power to assert themselves over the superior authority of the teacher, in whom they see the father or brother. I am reminded of one school run on self-government lines in which the head master himself joined in the "Parliament" at various sessions, as one among the pupils: the behaviour of certain of the latter revealed unmistakably their unconscious wishes; in some cases the rivalry was made plain, in others the situation of child to beloved father was equally obvious; while the head's own benevolent tolerance clearly covered a good deal of satisfaction in the alternate scolding and petting which he experienced. Again, pleasure in confessing "guilt" and in being "sentenced" was evident in a good many

cases. It is a question as to whether these various motivations may not call for more understanding before we give support to this plan, though some very obvious gains can be reckoned in certain directions, such as the sanction given to "revenge" expressed in legitimate form on the one hand, and to absolution from guilt on the other, in addition to the gratification obtained by group action.

From Self-government to Mental Tests is a far cry, but I have included the latter in my selection because they constitute a very modern, a very widespread, and an ever-increasingly popular mechanism (this seems to me the exactly correct term) in present-day Education.

As a convenient device (if reliability can be established) for estimating the degree of some mental process—such as the quantitative power of remembering or forgetting, the swiftness of reaction in given mental situations, the degree of accuracy in observation or mental judgment, and so forth—with a view to adaptation to a certain end, mental tests have their specific value. Doubtless the mental testing carried out on the American Army during the

War did, to some degree at least, enable the authorities to discover those men who were pre-eminently fitted to act as aviators, or leaders of attacks, or scouts, owing to their swift reactions to stimuli, their equilibrium, and their power of co-ordination. Just as we might, from mental testing carried out on school-children, say in relation to observation and reproduction of a film, a magic-lantern slide, or a picture, find which mental qualities appear to be predominant, which appear to go hand in hand, whether there appears relation between memory and other processes, and so forth. Even assuming that the results obtained are reliable, the question is, What have we achieved by the collection of such statistics? Is the real individual development better understood thereby? Can we make any true application to each individual from such enquiries? And a still more important question arises, namely; are the supposed results thus obtained any more than seeming? Since the "mental" test only takes cognizance of the conscious manifestation, it is clear that any "results" it achieves can be but partial

expressions of the tested individual. As such they have their validity in respect to some *practical end*: the subject who is incapable of making a rapid choice when several alternatives are presented to him, and remains pondering until the time for choosing is over, is most obviously not the man to select for a career which involves swift and accurate decisions; the schoolboy who either passes over or confuses any reference to figures in his various tests equally obviously is not going to develop his best capacities if forced into a profession involving mathematics; but if we leave out of account that which is the basis of this very "mental" condition—the emotional urges—the mental test will not give an accurate rendering even of the more "mental" side of the situation.

A simple illustration of this point will serve. In connexion with an arithmetical test carried out by a well-known exponent, a certain very simple problem was set centring round the number of butchers' shops in a certain street; information was given as to the total number of shops in the street and the number of

red-painted shops, red indicating butchers' shops, and the question to be answered was the number of butchers' shops alone. Those children of the many hundreds tested, ranging in age from ten to twelve years, who were unable to give the correct reply were put down as "below their correct mental age" by the investigators. Doubtless if about eighty per cent. could answer correctly, there is a possible meaning in calling the 20 per cent. who were unable thus to answer, exceptional or behind-hand in their mental development, but is such a conclusion based on any real knowledge of the exact state of affairs in the individual? It may well be that the fantasy set in motion by the butcher's-shop image is of a kind to create fear or guilt or emotional disturbance of some kind in certain individuals, whose general mentality nevertheless is more highly developed than that of the more balanced ones of the eighty per cent. group, and the question of power to calculate or grasp a problem cannot begin to present itself until the emotional conflict is resolved; thus the conclusions supposedly obtained do not really



touch the matter which nominally is being tested.

And the mental testers repeatedly obscure the issues in this way, by attempting to handle as separate and independent entities those manifestations they choose to call "mental" in the individual, ignoring the fact that the mental life is always based upon and involved with the life of the emotions. One may add that, leaving aside the sphere of the unconscious, one is constantly struck by the non-understanding attitude towards the child-mind revealed by these tests. There comes to my memory a problem detailed by a famous creator and advocate of mental tests, in a lecture some good time back. He was giving his audience examples of mental testing and describing one set of questions (not his own, I think) given to young children aged between seven and nine, roughly. One question he picked out was the following : *Why are cats useful?* Three answers were supplied, the pupil having merely to cross out any one or more which he thought incorrect, leaving the correct reply standing. I well remember

the smile with which the lecturer read out three "answers," which ran :

1. Because cats are beautiful,
2. Because cats catch mice,
3. Because cats are black,

concluding with the remark, "I need not tell *you*, ladies and gentlemen of the audience, which of the three is the only correct answer."

Now, surely it is a moot point, even for the adult, as to whether answers (1) and (2) may not both be valid as reply, since it is tenable that beautiful things which we love and cherish are "useful," and of value to us. However, it is pretty certain that the adult faced with these three answers will select No. 2 ("Because cats catch mice") as the correct (i.e. rational) answer. But for the child it is a very different matter: to him, unless already he is too dominated by the standards of authority, his instinctive wishes may quite as readily lead him to the answer which gratifies his pleasure-fantasy, especially as the term "useful" to a child of seven or eight can mean little more than "something I like," and for that idea,

answers 1 and 3 are equally valid ; whereas, the "correct" reply, "Because cats catch mice," may reveal a fact, known indeed, yet abhorrent to the child's emotions, so that he rejects such a view. I have chosen this instance to show how very wide of the mark these tests often are, inappropriate in their framing, revealing ignorance of the child's consciousness even, and completely ignoring the conflicts that may be set in action by the test, invalidating the so-called "mental" response of the child to his problem.

As has already been said, certain general mental situations are revealed by this device, but would not the same facts be ascertained by the teacher's study of the individual child as a whole, by watching his progress over a period, and by combined judgments on the part of those who are in contact with him in his school-life? One cannot help feeling that mental testing owes its popularity to some extent at least to the fact that it can be used conveniently, fairly quickly, and with economy of effort on the teacher's part (apart from those teachers who themselves do the creative work),

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as an agency for mass investigation and mass handling, a process which has little to do with any sort of real Education, but which bids fair to dominate human life in all its activities to-day; witness the cinema, wireless, the ever-encroaching Lyons of tea-shop fame, and last but not least the daily and weekly Press. In touching upon these various methods and ideas—and it is little more than a touch which I have been able to give in the space at my disposal—I have attempted to review them, not with disparaging criticism, but from the standpoint of psycho-analytic insight. The merits and advantages are fairly generally realized in every case, and to pass these over is by no means to imply that they do not exist, but merely to save space for the presentation of another and far less recognized angle of vision. To reveal what the unconscious has to say in face of every measure, rather than to rest content merely with surface “reality,” this appears to me the only sure foundation for any genuine process of Education, even though it may be at the cost of our most cherished illusions. I cannot end more

fitly than with these words of Freud: "Is it not for us to confess that . . . we are living psychologically beyond our means, and must reform and give truth its due? Illusion can have no value if it makes life more difficult for us."

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